

Hafa Adai!

Guam reports its 267th COVID-19-related death. **PAGE 2**

Next week eyed for 1st meeting of panel looking into Propst allegations. **PAGE 3**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

SURFIN' MARIANAS

Despite the dangerous conditions created by the high surf and rip currents that have been occurring across the Marianas these last few days, it has also created great conditions for surfing, which these group of surfers have taken advantage off at the Aquarius Hotel/Sugar Dock beach. The latest forecast from the National Weather Service in Guam says the CNMI should expect a high risk of hazardous rip currents through late Friday.

Story on Page 6

IVA MAURIN

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Interisland travel to resume if...

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Star Marianas Airlines Inc. said it will resume interisland air service under the condition that the Commonwealth Ports Authority suspends its imposition of fees until the end of the fiscal year or until their current dispute is resolved.

In response to CPA's latest appeal to accept a temporary resolution in the dispute and

resume interisland air service in the CNMI, Star Marianas president Shaun Christian said

he agrees that belaboring differences in opinion is not productive and only causes hardship to the traveling public.

As a sign of good faith, Christian said, SMA is willing

See SMA on Page 4



Christian

CHCC gets federal help at ACS

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Federal health care partners are on Saipan to aid the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. with its COVID-19 response.

A team that includes two nurses, one paramedic, two physicians, and W-1 DMAT commander Lisa Hass-Peters are currently at CHCC's Al-ternate Care Site at Kanoa Resort Saipan to take care

of patients brought in to the ACS to receive monoclonal antibody treatment.

In a news briefing with Hass-Peters yesterday, she said that she and the team ar-

See CHCC on Page 4

Atalig: \$21.7M COVID Relief Funds already spent



By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig said yesterday that the \$21.7 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds that U.S. House of Representatives Speaker

The final report will reflect all funds spent with actual expenditures line item.

Nancy Pelosi has asked about had already been spent by the CNMI government.

Atalig also disclosed that the CNMI government is currently awaiting reimbursement of \$23.5 million in expenses it

See ATALIG on Page 4

» 'Sablan should help get reimbursement of \$23.5M in CNMI expenses during Yutu, pandemic response'

16 DAYS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:03pm, Dec. 8, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **89.6%**
Fully Vaccinated: **89.6%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	35,057
Fully Vaccinated:	32,122
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,171
Fully Vaccinated:	4,798
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,072

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,283	4	19,287
Recovered	18,741	10	18,751
Active	265	4	269
Deaths	267	0	267

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	1,182	0	1,182
Traced via Travel Screening	267	0	267
Traced via Community Screening	915	0	915
Deaths	5	0	5

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

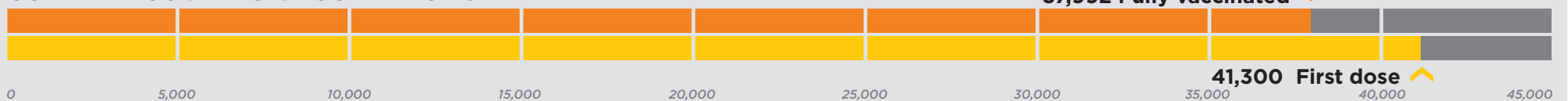
LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

37,992 Fully vaccinated



Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Amazon's cloud-service network suffers a major outage, disrupting access to many sites.

PAGE 11



NATION

A few Pearl Harbor survivors and other veterans gather at the site of the bombing 80 years ago.

PAGE 12



ASIA

New infections in South Korea exceeded 7,000 for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

PAGE 13



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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

Guam reports its 267th COVID-19-related death

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Joint Information Center in Guam reported on Dec. 7 the island's 267th COVID-19-related death—an unvaccinated 85-year-old female.

Guam's most recent COVID-19-related death had tested positive for COVID-19 on Nov. 29 and was pronounced dead at the Guam Regional Medical City on Dec. 1.

Guam acting governor Joshua Tenorio provided a statement in the JIC's Dec. 7 news release. On the behalf of Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, Tenorio said they both "pray for solace for her friends and family." Also in the statement, Tenorio encouraged the Guam community to make use of all the public health mitigation measures available to them, especially during the holiday season as families and

friends hold gatherings.

"With the holidays here, we must remain persistent with our efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at upcoming gatherings. Continue to wear your mask around others who are not within your immediate household, keep a safe and healthy distance between yourself and others, and do not attend a social gathering if you are sick," said Tenorio. "Most

importantly, get vaccinated if you are eligible and get your booster shot if it's been six months or more. These are all important measures to emerge from this holiday season stronger."

In a separate news release, the JIC reported on Dec. 8 that there are seven individuals in Guam who are hospitalized with COVID-19. Of the seven, five are vaccinated and two are unvaccinated. Of

the seven hospitalized, one is receiving Intensive Care Unit-level treatment and one is on a ventilator.

Last week, JIC reported three COVID-19-related fatalities.

The 264th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at GRMC on Nov. 26, 2021. The patient was a 68-year-old female, unvaccinated. She tested positive on Nov. 10, 2021.

The 265th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at GRMC on Nov. 30, 2021. The patient was a 36-year-old male, unvaccinated with underlying health conditions. He tested positive on Nov. 20, 2021.

The 266th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Dec. 1, 2021. The patient was a 54-year-old female, unvaccinated with underlying health conditions. She tested positive on Oct. 29, 2021.

'An Evening with TTT' celebrates Tasi to Table's accomplishments

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Since the inception of the Tasi to Table program, it has now grown beyond Gene Weaver's expectations. Schoolwide participation numbers have grown tremendously, said Weaver, who has been president of the organization for three years now.

These, among other accomplishments, were highlighted during a dinner event called "An Evening with TTT" last Tuesday at Lau Lau Bay Golf & Resort's The Grill restaurant that was attended by TTT's leadership team, board members, and some of its stakeholders.

Weaver said that schoolwide participation numbers doubled compared to last year, with around 30 students on a waitlist to join TTT's next program cycle. He credited TTT's success and growth to students

being at home and doing virtual classes and the CNMI community and people learning of TTT through word-of-mouth, and "it escalated from there."

When asked about TTT's upcoming plans to close the year and going into 2022, Weaver said the recent increase in positive cases of COVID-19, plus Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' Dec. 5 directive closing all non-essential government offices for two weeks, the Public School system transitioning to online classes from Dec. 6 to Dec. 23, and the COVID-19 pandemic in general are challenges for the organization's future events and activities.

In the meantime, Weaver said that TTT has "reshuffled" its eight-month program to accommodate Torres' and PSS' recent directives. "Everything is dependent on our situation; it regulates what we can

See TASI on Page 4

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Member
FDIC

Next week eyed for 1st meeting of panel looking into Propst allegations

Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the newly created committee that will look into the ethics complaint against Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said yesterday that he is planning to schedule their first meeting sometime next week.



Manglona

Manglona said the first step is to swear in the Ethics Committee's members fits and then come up with the rules. "I am working on the proposed rules," he said, adding that their first meeting will then follow by next week if they can get the rules done by then.

House Speaker Edmund S.



Propst

Villagomez appointed Manglona Friday to chair the House of Representatives Special Standing Committee on Official Conduct and Ethics. Its six committee members are Reps. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan), Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan), Corina L. Magofna (D-Saipan), Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian), and Leila C. Staffler (D-Saipan).

Citing House rules, Villagomez said, "Each member [of the committee] shall make an affirmation, under oath, that he will perform his duties...and...will not disclose confidential information acquired by him as a result of his participation in the work of the committee."

Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiaage, who is a counselor and an advocate for the rights of abused women, has yet to comment about the creation and composition of the Ethics Committee.

It was Vaiaage who filed the ethics complaint against Propst last Nov. 9 over allegations that he had sex with

several underaged women approximately 20 years ago when he was still a teacher at Marianas High School and

an employee at the Northern Marianas College.

Propst has denied the allegations. He earlier also stated

that Villagomez had spoken to him about the formation of the Ethics Committee and that he welcomes it.

Villagomez said his intention is to form the Ethics Committee and then keep it for the rest of the 22nd Legislature's

term so that if any other ethics complaint arises, they already have a committee for it. (Ferdie de la Torre)

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• KBB: \$21,331

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G4



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• KBB: \$16,067

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MAZDA3
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• STK: 17P334
• KBB: \$25,435

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• STK: 14P342
• KBB: \$41,584

2019 JEEP
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• STK: 19P349

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Marianas Christmas Village canceled

Due to the closure of non-essential government offices and in cooperation with initiatives to minimize social gatherings due to COVID-19, the Marianas Christmas Village and Christmas Tree display organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority at Garapan Fishing Base is cancelled. Light sculptures will be displayed. For more information, contact the MVA Community Projects Division at communityprojects@mymarianas.com. (PR)

ATALIG

From Page 1

incurred during Super Typhoon Yutu and from the pandemic response.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* request for clarification about his letter to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), Atalig said all \$36.3 million in CARES Act funding, including the \$21.7 million, had already been spent but they have not finalized their report to the U.S. Treasury yet.

"The final report will reflect all funds spent with actual expenditures line item," he said.

CHCC

From Page 1

rived on Saipan on Dec. 3 and will be leaving on Dec. 14 "with the potential of extending." Hass-Peters also briefly explained what is the process of identifying patients for monoclonal antibody treatment, transporting these individuals to the ACS, and transporting these individuals back to the quarantine site they are staying.

Hass-Peters said she and the team receive a list of patients that are then contacted. Depending on their symptoms, they are then placed on a schedule to be brought to the ACS to receive treatment via the CNMI's emergency medical services system, are met by nurses, brought to the ACS treatment area, and evaluated.

After that, pharmacists bring the medication, the patients are administered four injections, are evaluated for a short period after receiving these injections, and then discharged back to the CNMI's EMS system who will bring these patients back to the respective site they are quarantining in.

Hass-Peters made clear that the federal partners' role at the ACS is supplemental to CHCC's efforts, and that personnel who have already been working at the ACS are already trained in administering monoclonal antibody treatment.

"The nurses and health care work-

Atalig said they are still reconciling the expenses to ensure that they do not show an expense in CARES Act funding that was already reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or that has been requested for reimbursement.

"Keep in mind, FEMA has deemed some expenditures as unallowable for reimbursement, which then CARES Act [funds] can be used," he said.

Atalig said the final report will be done before the deadline of Jan. 10, 2022.

Last week, Sablan wrote Gov. Ralph DLG Torres informing him that Pelosi had asked him about the

\$21.7 million COVID-19 relief funds for the CNMI that was expiring on Dec. 31, 2021. Sablan said that Pelosi had asked him (Sablan) for the governor's plan of expenditure for these funds.

Atalig wrote his response to Sablan yesterday, where he said the various funding sources provided to the CNMI are a mix of various programs and have different reporting requirements.

Atalig said much of the local resources utilized in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the natural disasters that preceded it have been incurred under the expectation of re-

imbursements.

He said the timely processing and remittance of these reimbursements is critical to the continued operation of the CNMI's response and related efforts.

"This requires a process for first, pursuing and accounting for potential reimbursable costs, which takes additional effort to ensure all costs submitted are in compliance with federal regulations and guidance" he said.

Atalig said while Finance and the government wish to expeditiously use all available funds, they must do so in a manner that demonstrates accountability and prudent fiscal management as a responsible awarded entity.

Atalig said they appreciate Sablan's concern with regard to the COVID-19 expenses and assured him that his interest in using these funds for healthcare and education has been a priority.

However, Atalig said, not included in Sablan's request was the additional priority in support of the Commonwealth's public safety, which have also been at the frontlines in the response to the pandemic. He said the expenses to these critical areas will

be reported to the federal government when all information has been verified and reconciled.

In the meantime, Atalig said, Finance requests Sablan's assistance in aiding in the receipt of these reimbursements necessary to adequately continue the response of the CNMI government to the current pandemic. "Reimbursements on the expenses we have incurred can put the CNMI government in a position to more rapidly respond to the evolving needs of these residents, and the needs of the many first responders who are actively engaged in the front lines to ensure community's safety and well-being," he said.

Atalig said the community has demonstrated a remarkable ability to rally together during this crisis, and it is their shared responsibility to ensure that the use of funds that support their sacrifices and commitment are well spent and managed on both the federal and local level.

This includes, he said, prudent accounting and accurate reporting of these expenses locally and the timely reimbursement of approved expenses from the federal government.



Wisconsin-1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team commander Lisa Hass-Peters and group supervisor for the National Disaster Medical System David Fifer speak with the CNMI's media partners during a news briefing yesterday at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Alternate Care Site at Kanoa Resort Saipan.

JOSHUA SANTOS

ers here [are trained in administering the treatment]. We are here to help augment and help support. We're not here to take over. ...We're here to help, and they have been fantastic," she said.

Speaking briefly on the working relationship with ACS personnel thus far, Hass-Peters said she "cannot speak any higher" of their colleagues so far.

"I cannot speak any higher of all the people that we have been working [with] here. They have been gracious, kind, and very understanding in helping us to become better to help you. We have had such a fantastic working relationship with them. They've been very patient with our

questions, and seriously I could not have expected it to go any better," she said.

According to its website, the W-1 DMAT is part of the National Disaster Medical System, a federally-coordinated system that provides medical capabilities in the event of a large-scale emergency that overwhelms normal local medical resources.

Hass-Peters explained that she and all W-1 DMAT members are professional medical health care providers and are considered intermittent federal employees. As such, W-1 DMAT is available to go as needed, she said.

Hass-Peters said that, outside of being W-1 DMAT commander, she is a registered nurse.

SMA

From Page 1

to compromise and resume interisland service if CPA and the CNMI administration agree to suspend the imposition of fees.

CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said in a brief statement yesterday that CPA can't do that, though.

In Christian's letter to CPA, he said: "In view of the hardship that the temporary suspension of service causes on the interisland traveling public, and [CPA] and the governor's offer to suspend imposition of fees until the dispute can be resolved, SMA will also extend a token of good faith toward the resolution of the current impasse by resuming interisland flight service and submit its intention to resume scheduled flights to Tinian and Rota on an expedited basis to the Department of Transportation, with the CPA's concurrence that the resumption of scheduled flight service, on an expedited basis, is needed to relieve the burden on interisland travel," he said.

In addition to suspending airport usage fees, Star Marianas also wants CPA to agree to a meeting within 60 days of coming to an agreement to try to resolve some of their major issues; and for both parties to mutually sponsor a request with the [Federal Aviation Administration] to answer questions regarding fees and the rules CPA must follow in assessing them. Then, and only then, will Star Marianas take the necessary steps to resume interisland travel, he said.

"This resumption of service will be with the express understanding that: A. Fees and charges under the new methodology will be suspended until agreement is reached between the CPA and SMA or Sept. 30, 2022, whichever is sooner; B. During this moratorium period, the parties will meet within 60 days of acceptance of this agreement by the CPA to discuss and resolve the major disputes that have been highlighted by both sides in recent filings with the DOT; C. In attempting to achieve any mu-

tually satisfactory solution by CPA and SMA during their negotiations, the parties will mutually sponsor a request to the FAA to answer core questions that form the basis of the CPA/SMA dispute including (1) the fees that can be assessed to SMA under a Compensatory rate methodology and (2) the conformity of the CNMI Regulations under which the compensatory fees are imposed by the CPA, based on the type of aircraft that SMA utilizes to provide flight services to the public," he said.

Christian said he hopes the compromise will bring forth a resolution to CPA and Star Marianas' longstanding disputes.

"It is hoped that based on these offers of good faith we can resolve the longstanding disputes and achieve a more harmonious working relationship, in order that we may both devote our full attention to serving the best interests of the CNMI traveling public. As soon as we receive your concurrence with the terms contained in this letter, we will commence the necessary steps to establishing air service," Christian said.

When sought for comments, King-Hinds said that if CPA could suspend fees, they would've done so already but, unfortunately, they can't and the only plausible temporary solution is to accept the subsidy the CNMI government has offered Star Marianas Air.

"We can't suspend rates just for one airline. We have to treat everyone the same so that we don't run afoul of our grant assurance requirements. That's why we sought the help of the governor and we were fortunate that he understood the complexities of the situation and gave his support. His offer was to fully subsidize whatever fees that SMA would be incurring for the remainder of fiscal year 2022 as CPA and SMA work through the dispute provided that SMA lowers ticket fares. They've rejected that offer. The latest request asks that CPA suspend our new rates. We cannot do that just for SMA. We would have to do that for everyone which we can't," she said.

TASI

From Page 2

do with the students. ...We have to follow what PSS is implementing and their policies regarding [COVID-19]," he said.

Weaver added that he and TTT would love to say that they will go through with events and activities it had planned for TTT's student members and the community, but said the recent rise in cases and temporary restrictions will be a challenge.

Also present at the dinner on Tuesday was TTT's recently-elected vice president Dan Wollak, who has been a TTT adviser at Marianas High School since TTT's first year.

Wollak, who was elected to the vice president role around two weeks ago, said he looks forward to tapping his experience as a TTT adviser to give his perspective and bridge the gap between TTT's school and community efforts. Wollak is a physical education teacher at MHS, is involved with the "Swim For Life



Tasi to Table president Gene Weaver gives his remarks during Tuesday night's "An Evening with TTT" at Lao Lao Bay Golf & Resort's The Grill restaurant.

JOSHUA SANTOS

CNMI" program, and coaches boys' and girls' basketball and golf.

"I was talking with my wife and she knows how much I love this program, and she said, 'You know what? I support you if this is something you want to do, go for it.' ...I love what I've seen in the program. I love what it's done for students and just for the community, so I decided that I wanted to not just be an adviser, but also see where I could help on the other end as an officer," said Wollak.

Tasi to Table seeks to share with

the youth the joys of fishing. TTT first began with a six-month program for the Da'Ok Academy in summer 2019, and started an eight-month program for Saipan's high school students in 2020. TTT launched Tinian and Rota branches this summer, first testing out a four-month pilot program with hopes to begin an eight-month program on both islands next school year. Students who participate and complete TTT's programs earn elective credit hours that go toward high school graduation.



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Santos recommends pursuing other airlines for interisland flights

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With Star Marianas Air's continued suspension of interisland flights, Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) strongly recommends that the CNMI government pursue other airlines to meet the demand for essential interisland air transportation.

Santos told *Saipan Tribune* over the weekend that she supports Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds' position about the need for the CNMI to avail of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Small Community and Rural Air Service program as the long-term solution to

CPA's and Star Marianas Air's dispute over new rates methodology for interisland travel.

Santos said DOT's Small Community and Rural Air Service program helps small communities address air service and airfare issues and can involve revenue guarantees, financial assistance for marketing programs, startup costs, and studies.

King-Hinds wrote SMA president Shaun Christian last Friday and presented the CPA board's proposed solution to the new rates methodology.

In the interim, with the goal of immediately resum-



Santos

ing interisland air connectivity, King-Hinds said that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has committed to fully subsidize all fees and charges that CPA will assess SMA for the remainder of fiscal year 2022, provided that SMA agrees to reduce the cost of travel to Tinian and Rota.

The CPA chair said Torres is committed to finding a way to permanently lower the cost of interisland travels.

Christian had replied that subsidizing fees is not the solution because the airline is capable of managing its own business affairs. He also expressed

doubts over CPA's sincerity in resolving the current and any future disputes in good faith.

He, however, wrote King-Hinds yesterday, offering solutions to resolve CPA's and SMA's longstanding dispute and achieve a more harmonious relationship, in order that both parties devote full attention to serving the best interests of the traveling public.

Santos said SMA provides the sole air transportation service to and from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, a service that is critically needed, especially for interisland medical referral patients and medical emergencies.

The senator said the distance between the islands, in particular from Rota to Saipan, is

quite a distance for patients to be transported via boats, thus they rely on SMA for essential air transportation service.

CNMI to see hazardous rip currents until Friday

The National Weather Service based off of Tiyan, Guam said the CNMI should expect a high risk of hazardous rip currents through late Friday.

NWS explains that seas and surf are on the rise across the region due to several weather systems in the open ocean that are causing massive areas of strong winds of 25 to 40 mph over the Philippine Sea and the central Pacific, near and northeast of Wake Island. In turn, these winds have generated large ocean swell that will affect our islands the next several days.

The CNMI is expected to

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

see large breaking waves up to 12 feet in the surf zone and dangerous rip currents at north and east facing reefs.

Because of this, swimming and surfing conditions will be extremely dangerous. Localized beach erosion will also be possible.

The National Weather Service encourages inexperienced swimmers to stay out of the water along north and east facing shores. If caught in a rip current, you should swim in a direction following the shoreline until you are out of the current, then head in to shore. **(Kimberly B. Esmores)**

JKPL open for limited services

Effective last Dec. 7, 2021, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library will be open for the following limited services: curbside pick-up service, virtual learning resources, free wi-fi in the parking lot, outdoor book drop/returns, "Ask a Librarian," and temporary virtual library card application.

While the JKPL facility will be closed until Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021, JKPL will be open for the above-mentioned limited public services to ensure the health and safety of its patrons, and in compliance with governor's Memo GOV21-249: "Closure of non-essential government offices for the next 14 days" (Dec. 5, 2021).

Curbside pick-up services

Curbside service will continue to be provided for those who prefer to pick up their materials outside of the library. In order to alleviate traffic concerns, congregating of our patrons, and continue safe-distancing best practices, patrons are asked to call 235-7322/7323 (READ) from Tuesday to Friday from 9:30am to 1:30pm (*tentative*). Closed on holidays. There will be one staff assigned to answer phones to assist with scheduling curbside pick-up of library materials by appointment only.

Curbside pick-up (by appointment only)

Procedure:

1) Place items on hold beginning Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. Search the library's online catalog at www.cnmlib.org or call the library to place holds on the item(s) you want. There is a temporary limit of 05 holds per valid library card. If you currently have more than 05 holds on your card, call the library at 235-7322/7323 (READ) to speak to a staff person. You will receive a notification (by email, text

message, or phone depending on your account preference) letting you know that you can call to schedule pickup.

2) Pick up your items. All items will be checked out and bagged ahead of time. Each bag will have your holds slip stapled to it for identification. Have your library card ready and ID available. Library staff will be wearing masks and gloves, and we ask that you wear a mask and stay in your car. On a big piece of paper, write your last name and library card number placed inside of

front windshield. Ensure it is legible to library staff.

Pickups at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library will take place via the parking lot. Pop your trunk or open a passenger window. Library staff will place your bag in your car.

Pick up your bag of library materials and enjoy!

Returning books into the book drop

The library asks that all library materials continue to be returned in the book drop that is located outside of the main entrance as they will be placed in quarantine for a week prior to returning to regular shelves for circulation.

Library materials due during closure will be waived

Due dates for all library items have been extended to at least Dec. 20, 2021. All books due during temporary closure of JKPL facility from Tuesday, Dec. 6 to Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021 will be waived. No fines will be accrued during this two-week closure.

Free temporary library card for virtual access only

Effective Friday, Dec. 10, 2021, JKPL will be issuing a virtual library card good for one month's use of our virtual learning resources. Must be 6 years old and over with

proof of mailing address and valid picture identification. Must contact JKPL via email to cnmistatelibary@gmail.com to submit documentation and complete temporary library card application form online.

Free wi-fi

Free wi-fi access point in the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library parking lot available and open to the community.

Virtual services and reference help

Free e-book and virtual learning resources access for CNMI library card patrons by visiting www.cnmlib.org.

You can check out the following free virtual learning resources: Mango Languages, Baker & Taylor Axis 360, Ebscohost, Gale Cengage, First Books Open e-books, online card catalog, Niche Academy, READsquared, and Grow with Google.

'Ask a Librarian'

Library staff provide answers to general inquiries regarding library services and/or use information resources to help others meet particular information needs. Please email cnmistatelibary@gmail.com or private message facebook [@joetenkiyu-publiclibrary](https://www.facebook.com/joetenkiyu-publiclibrary). **(PR)**

Free virtual learning resources at JKPL

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library offers free e-book and virtual learning resources access for CNMI library card patrons at www.cnmlib.org.

You can check out the following free virtual learning resources: Mango Languages, Baker & Taylor Axis 360, Ebscohost, Gale Cengage, First Books Open e-books, online card catalog, Niche Academy, READsquared, and Grow with Google.

1. Learn a new language with Mango Languages online for free at your Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, Tinian Public Library, and Antonio C. Atalig Memorial Library (Rota).

Mango Languages is an award-winning language-education resource utilized by K-12 and Higher-Ed, corporations, library systems, and government agencies worldwide. With Mango languages, library cardholders have free access to: step by step lesson plans for over 70 world languages and more than 20 ESL/ELL courses (Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Brazilian Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Span-

ish, Turkish, and Vietnamese speakers, etc.); listening and reading activities for reinforcing learned material and building new skills; grammar and culture insights for authentic and reliable learning; assessments and chapter recaps to check understanding and learning progress personalized review that adapts to your learning pathway; study reminders to keep you on track and motivated family profiles for additional parent and family engagement; and a text translator.

2. Baker & Taylor Axis 360: Baker & Taylor offers free e-book access to over 600 bestseller e-books and audio books.

3. EBSCOhost is an intuitive online research platform used by thousands of institutions and millions of users worldwide. With quality databases and search features, EBSCOhost helps researchers of all kinds find the information they need fast. The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library the following research databases for the CNMI: Explora (Elementary School Databases), Explora (Middle and High School Databases), Consumer Health

Complete, Novelist, Novelist K-8, and the Small Business Reference Center.

4. The JKPL provides the following Gale Cengage databases for CNMI: Gale General OneFile, Gale Business: Plan Builder, Gale Business: Entrepreneurship, Gale Health and Wellness, Gale Literature Resource Center, Gale Books and Authors, Gale Interactive: Science, National Geographic Magazine from 1888-Current, National Geographic: People, Animals and the World, National Geographic Kids, Gale In Context: Biography, Gale In Context: Environmental Studies, Gale In Context: Global Issues, Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints, Gale In Context: Science, and Gale In Context: World History.

5. First Book Open E-Books: Open eBooks is a library containing thousands of popular and award-winning titles that are free for children from in-need communities. These eBooks can be read without checkouts or holds. The goal of Open eBooks is to encourage a love of reading and serve as a gateway to children reading even more often,

whether in school, at libraries, or through other eBook reading apps. Contact the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library for your PIN number, and then go to www.openebooks.net.

6. The www.cnmlib.org online catalog provides access to JKPL books and place holds. It also shows status of books available at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. You can place your library items on hold, provided you have a valid library card number.

7. Niche Academy: An amazing virtual resource is Joeten-Kiyu Public Library Academy through Niche Academy. Visit <https://my.nicheacademy.com/cnmlib> and you will see online tutorials that teach you how to use library e-resources like e-books, research databases, and language learning tools.

8. READsquared: Access free reading challenges and win fun prizes for reading on READsquared by visiting www.cnmlib.org!

9. JKPL is a Grow with Google partner. As a Grow with Google partner, we help create economic opportunities for everyone. Grow with Google Partner Program of-

fers free resources for your organization to teach people the digital skills that will grow their careers and businesses. We bring free digital skills classes to our community to empower them to learn and grow. Applied Digital Skills is designed to help learners develop digital skills for the evolving workforce through free video-based curriculum. Learners watch videos that teach digital skills in the context of creating a project, such as Start a Resume, Edit Your Resume, Prepare for Your Business Plan, and more. Learners can watch videos at their own pace and complete their projects independently, or library staff can answer questions and give individualized support based on each learner's needs. <https://grow.google/partners/> Moreover, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, as a member of the American Library Association and the Public Library Association through www.digitallearn.org is an online learning platform from PLA that provides short lessons to help learners tackle technology at their own pace. **(PR)**

Navy contests Hawaii's orders to suspend, drain fuel tanks

HONOLULU (AP)—The U.S. Navy is contesting orders from Hawaii to suspend use of fuel tanks and drain them at a complex above an aquifer that supplies nearly 20% of Honolulu's drinking water until certain conditions are met.

The Navy has already said it was suspending use of the massive World War II-era fuel storage complex near Pearl Harbor following days of complaints that tap water smells like fuel and has sickened some people.

But Hawaii's state government order demands that the suspension remain in effect until independent evaluators can ensure that appropriate actions are taken to protect drinking water.

The state also wants the Navy to treat contaminated drinking water and remove fuel from the massive 20 underground storage tanks at the complex called the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.

Putting the storage facility out of use could affect operations at a critical time for the Navy, especially as tensions rise in the Pacific with China's rhetoric about

Taiwan ramping up over the past year, said Lyle Goldstein, a Pacific Ocean maritime security and director of Asia Engagement at Defense Priorities think tank.

The Hawaii Department of Health on Monday ordered the Navy to suspend operations at the fuel facility, citing the governor's power to act if there is "imminent peril to human health and safety or the environment" caused by a leak or operation of an underground storage tank system.

The order came shortly after Navy officials said they already had suspended fuel complex operations. The state health department set a hearing for Tuesday afternoon, but it was postponed after the Navy informed state officials that it planned to contest the emergency order.

Navy officials on Tuesday did not respond to emails and phone messages seeking comment on why the order was being contested even though use of the fuel complex was already suspended.

"Hawaii's wellbeing and the safety of our residents, including military families, must

come first. We cannot have national security without ensuring public health and safety," Gov. David Ige, a Democrat, said in a statement.

In announcing the shutdown of the complex that supplies fuel to U.S. military ships and planes that patrol the Pacific, Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro on Monday did not say how long it would last but insisted that the cutoff's impact on military operations would "have a very minimal effect, if any, at all right now."

But Goldstein, of Asia Engagement at Defense Priorities, said losing the option of using the fuel filling complex poses a strategic challenge for the U.S. military's ability to operate effectively.

"Hawaii is really probably the most important US base in the whole Asia Pacific, so undoubtedly this is a big challenge for the Navy," he said. "I can't emphasize enough that the fleet cannot operate without fuel and the amount of fuel consumed is truly enormous. I don't think people realize what it takes to keep a carrier group moving and flying."

Although the Navy uses nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, immense amounts of traditional fuel are required for the aircraft operating from the carriers and for the ships that protect them. The Navy's submarines run on nuclear power and would not be affected, Goldstein said.

Del Toro said he did not "want to get into topics with conversations with regards to how long we can continue to do this for national security reasons, but there's really no minimum operation to our fleet's activities or activities impacting the Air Force or the



Del Toro

Army or the Marine Corps for any near term at all."

The Roosevelt administration during World War II ordered the construction of the Red Hill underground facility. Experts have said Japan during its attack on Pearl Harbor could have done much more damage and possibly altered the outcome of the war if it had attacked fuel storage on Hawaii instead of U.S. ships.

Ige was not available to comment Tuesday in more detail on the state's efforts for suspending use of the fuel tank complex because he was participating in events marking the 80th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, said Ige spokesperson Cindy McMillan.

The Navy's water system serves about 93,000 people

in and near Pearl Harbor and nearly 1,000 military households have complained about their tap water. Some have said they have suffered physical ailments such as cramps and vomiting recently after drinking it.

Water sample testing last week showed the presence of petroleum in water that comes from a well near the underground fuel tank complex that has been the source of multiple fuel leaks over the years.

Del Toro on Monday said officials were getting close to determining the cause of the problem and that when the investigation is completed and reviewed, the Navy will adopt water safety precautions.

He apologized for what he called a "horrible, horrible tragedy."

Clemency denied for man convicted of sex abuse of minor

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres did not approve the recommendation to grant clemency to a man who is serving a 10-year sentence for sexually abusing a 7-year-old back in 2016.

During a hearing last week at the U.S. District Court for the NMI, assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise informed the court that

Torres will not grant clemency to Price Shoiter at this time.

Blaise also updated the court about Shoiter's medical appointment that took place on Nov. 1, and the schedule of his surgery.

District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona recommended that the lawyers for the parties meet and confer to discuss a new scheduling order. She then scheduled a settlement conference for Jan. 6, 2022, at 1:30pm.

She said a stipulated proposed scheduling order shall be submitted by the parties no later than Dec. 10, 2021.

Shoiter, a 74-year-old Chuukese national, was sentenced in 2016 to a 10-year prison sentence for sexually abusing a 7-year-old girl. He has sued the Department of Corrections and its former

and current officials in federal court, alleging that he was denied adequate medical care.

In February 2021, a settlement agreement was signed by all parties, contingent on the governor's approval of Shoiter's application for conditional clemency.

In July 2021, the CNMI Board of Parole recommended clemency for Shoiter.

Last month, Shoiter,

through his court-appointed attorney, Michael Dotts, asked the federal court to set a deadline and hold a status conference for the defendant.

If the governor does not grant the conditional clemency, then pursuant to Section 4.1.3 of the Settlement Agreement, Dotts said the settlement was "null and void" and the case was to be placed back on track for trial.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID RFP NO.: DPW21-RFP-42200016

SUBMISSION DATE: January 11, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Architectural and Engineering Design of Route 205 Road and Drainage Improvement, Tinian; Project No. TQ-THS-0205 (101)"

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THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **December 09, 2021** at the Department of Public Works, Technical Services Division 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **December 28, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 05, 2022** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ANTHONY A. CAMACHO
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

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Location:

- Tinian Bulk Plant, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Job Duties:

- Executes and complies with company's operational procedures and systems, policies and guidelines by using terminal manuals and procedures, loss prevention tools, and corporate & industry standards.
- Conducts routine facility inspections. Maintains housekeeping and conducts maintenance and repairs to ensure safe operating conditions.
- Performs safe marine terminal operations, shore to ship and ship to shore transfers of bulk petroleum products, tank truck loading, pipeline transfers and product quality testing.
- Adheres to safety and environmental programs. Takes a dynamic and proactive approach to protect the environment and the safety, health and security of employees, customers and public.
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- Conducts simple math calculations and conversions of temperature, weights and measures.

Job Requirements:

- Experience in safe petroleum handling, distribution and storage or related field
- Familiarity with computer applications in spreadsheet and word processing (i.e., MS Word and Excel)
- Understanding of U.S. federal and local regulations as applicable to petroleum handling, storage, and distribution
- Ability to work shifts based on a 24-hour work day, work extended hours, weekends, and holidays
- Good interpersonal skills, ability to communicate verbally and in writing in English

Preference will be given to candidates with relevant experience in marine terminal operations and with previous experience in petroleum industry

If you are interested in and/or meet the qualifications for this position, please submit your resume on or before December 31, 2021 to the following:

Attention to:

Ramon Villagomez,

Field Operations Manager-CNMI

P.O. Box 500367 CK, Saipan, MP 96950

Fax: (670) 236-8190

Email: ramon.villagomez@exxonmobil.com

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Opinion

Hafa Adail

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

UFOs, UAPs—whatever they're called, the US needs to know what they are

A few years ago, it would have drawn jokes and scorn. But given the continuing mystery over what, exactly, U.S. military pilots are seeing in the skies, a congressional proposal to create an “Anomaly Surveillance and Resolution Office”—an office to investigate what used to be called UFOs—makes sense.

This is no laughing matter. In 2017, The New York Times reported that the U.S. military was gathering data from pilots who had reported unexplained encounters during their flights. Recently released video of some of those encounters defies conventional explanation—objects moving at speeds and in ways that don't conform with current aviation technological capabilities. And unlike most of the wack-a-doodle stuff from UFO culture, the Pentagon confirms those videos are real.

It's not to say these are little green men. This could be Russian or Chinese or North Korean technology being taken out for a test-drive under the noses of American military pilots to gauge U.S. reaction. Among the most startling aspects of the Pentagon's recent new openness on this topic is its acknowledgment that this isn't one or two or a half-dozen unexplained encounters. It's happening with relative frequency, often in restricted airspace.

The acronym UFO—unidentified flying object—was a military creation from the 1950s but has since then been so thoroughly commandeered by pop culture that the military has ditched it and now uses a new acronym: UAP, for “unidentified aerial phenomena.” (No doubt it'll appear in the title of a Steven Spielberg film some time soon.)

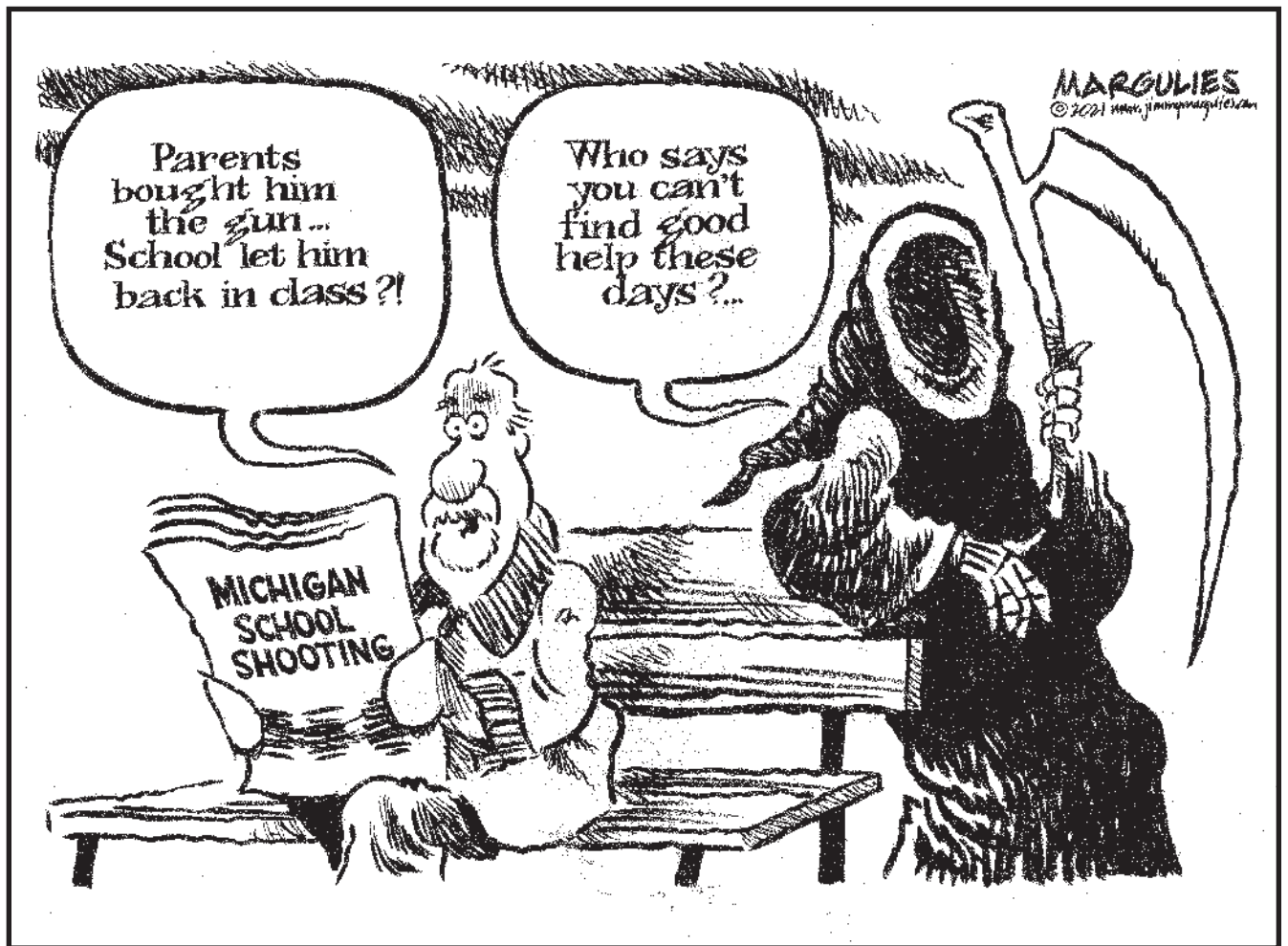
The Pentagon this summer issued a report on UAP sightings that raised more questions than it answered. It found no solid evidence that the still-unexplained sightings were from global adversaries or ... something else ... but it encouraged political leaders to begin taking the issue more seriously than they traditionally have.

Not so long ago, it would have sounded like science fiction, but today it makes perfect sense that Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., is proposing creation of the Anomaly Surveillance and Resolution Office, dedicated to investigating these sightings as they occur. Gillibrand has introduced an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act establishing the office.

“If it is technology possessed by adversaries or any other entity, we need to know. ... Burying our heads in the sand is neither a strategy nor an acceptable approach,” Gillibrand told Politico last month. “I can count on one hand the number of hearings I had in 10 years on this topic. That's fairly concerning given the experience our service members have had over the last decade.”

The idea has wide bipartisan support—a rarity these days, and an indication of how seriously this once-snicker-inducing topic is now being taken in Washington. For once, Washington is right.

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The only two pieces of advice you'll ever need

As a writer, podcaster and economist—not necessarily in that order—I receive numerous emails asking for advice. People ask for my opinion not only on economic questions, but also about what kind of job they should get, if they should return to school, whether they should marry a given person, how to plan a wedding, which books they should read and, yes, what is the meaning of life.

I am reluctant to hand out advice, if only because a) I don't even know these people, and b) a proper answer is usually context-specific. Nonetheless, I think there are two pieces of advice that are appropriate for almost everybody, in response to almost any question. Here they are. Maybe I should just send all future requests for advice a link to this column.

The first piece of advice stems from what has been dubbed in Silicon Valley “the small group theory.” It goes like this:

- When working on any kind of problem, task or question, embed yourself in a small group of peers with broadly similar concerns.

The group will give you ideas, feedback and help keep you focused on the issue at hand. The personalities and framings of the other group members will make the issue seem more vivid. Membership in the informal small group may also make you more willing to help its other members, which in turn may boost your morale and performance. After all, there are few problems you are better off facing alone.

The small group can be as formal or informal as you like: friends hanging out after high school, an official support network that meets regularly (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous), a team in the workplace, or artists sharing a studio. No, you shouldn't ally yourself with a group of bank robbers, but still this is almost always good advice.

If you are wondering what “small group theory” is, I would define it roughly as follows: Important achievements stem from people working together in small groups, typically of their immediate peers. The hypothesis holds for ancient Greek philosophy, the Florentine Renaissance, German mathematics, Silicon Valley and the Beatles, among many other success stories, both large and small.

The small group theory may sound trivial, but in job and fellowship interviews I often ask people which small groups they work in, and what their role is in those groups. Many people are flummoxed by the question, and it appears they haven't thought about the issue much as they should.

The second near-universal piece of advice is this:

- Get mentors.

By TYLER COWEN

Bloomberg Opinion

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution. His books include *Big Business: A Love Letter to an American Anti-Hero*.



A mentor is someone who knows significantly more about an area than you do, with greater real-world experience to boot, and who channels that knowledge into a leadership role.

Mentorship can be general or specialized. I have had classical-music mentors, art-market mentors, country-specific mentors when I lived in Germany and New Zealand, foreign-language mentors, chess mentors, economics mentors, philosophy mentors, writing mentors and friendly mentors to help with the basic emotional issues of life. I've tried to find mentors for just about everything. Sometimes the relationship lasts only a week or a month, other times for years.

Aside from providing teaching and advice, the mentor, like the small group, helps make an issue or idea more vivid: A living, breathing exemplar of success stands before you. The mentor makes a discipline feel more real and the prospect of success more realistic.

As a corollary, in addition to trying to find mentors, you should be willing to become a mentor yourself. Even if you do not have advanced understanding in some particular area, almost certainly there is someone who knows less than you do and who could use assistance. Being a mentor also helps you understand how to learn and appreciate your own mentors.

A mentor doesn't have to be older than you, and in fact some of your mentors probably should be younger, especially since technologies are starting to change more rapidly. If you are 50 years old, the idea of an 18-year-old crypto mentor isn't crazy. If the metaverse turns into a reality, don't look to the graybeards for tutelage.

The relative dearth of male-to-female mentorships is one of the major factors holding women back from greater career success. This form of implicit but not necessarily intentional discrimination deserves wider discussion.

So there you have it: small groups and mentors. And if you don't agree, well ... I know a small group for advice-giving that might like a word with you.

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With Pearl Harbor memories still raw, Hollywood told the story through an unexpected lens

For many years as I was growing up, my mother's companion was a man named Bob Kulicke. He was 16 when Pearl Harbor was bombed 80 years ago, on Dec. 7, 1941, and he and his buddies were disappointed to be too young to join up. They were sure that this war would be over by the time they could.

No such luck. On his 18th birthday he got a telegram from Uncle Sam that began "Greetings." Three years later he came home, after fighting five campaigns against the Japanese in the Pacific. Among them were New Guinea and Ie Shima, a small island off the coast of Okinawa. He manned twin .50-caliber machine guns, defending airstrips and ammo dumps.

Bob was a painter of some note, and this fascinated many people, but I was more interested in the tales he told of World War II. And he told them with relish. He'd barely escaped with his life. Even then, in the 1970s, he preferred cloudy afternoons because the Japanese "won't strafe us today."

But one of my fondest memories of Bob is not of a story he told, but of a movie we watched together: "Tora! Tora! Tora!" This was in the middle of the night, in Brooklyn, on a color television that was so old it showed everything in various shades of blue. No matter. I was enthralled.

"Tora! Tora! Tora!" came out in 1970 and told, in epic scale from both the Japanese and American points of view, the story of the planning and execution of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It was one of the last Hollywood blockbusters from the studio era and was a passion project of Darryl F. Zanuck, the legendary 20th Century Fox chairman who some suspected was slipping into dementia when the film was made. It pretty much flopped at the box office.

Of course, I didn't know that when I was 13. I was fascinated by the planes, the ships and all the stuff blowing up. But something else: As I watched the film that night with Bob, I realized we were both rooting for ... the Japanese.

It is only since I've grown into adulthood that I've come to re-

alize what a remarkable movie this was, even if cineastes scoff. It and Hollywood helped bring Japan and the United States closer together when fresh memories of the war still scarred both nations' psyches.

Impaired or not, Zanuck and his producer, Elmo Williams, had a bold idea that seems all the more amazing as the decades go by, and as the world remains a violent and dangerous place. All the Japanese sequences were made by Japanese filmmakers, with Japanese crews and casts. Japanese screenwriters wrote the script. Advisors included Minoru Genda, an architect of the actual attack. One of the eventual directors had trained as a kamikaze pilot.

Thus, just 25 years after Dec. 7, 1941, former combatants joined forces to tell the story of how it all began. Imagine if all once-warring nations did the same?

Until that point, most portrayals of the Japanese in World War II films were stereotypical at best, and often downright racist. They were shown as evil, duplicitous and often incompetent. Not in "Tora." Here they were professional military men, highly skilled, wrestling with the violence they were about to unleash—on our country and, eventually, on their own. The pilots were dashing and brave. They flew those planes with remarkable elan. Bob, for one, said the flying in the film—which is extraordinary—was true to life. Perhaps a bit too much so.

Lots of old-time moviemaking went into the film. A life-sized Japanese battleship was built out of wood on a beach in Kyushu. More than 70 actual planes were used. Hangars in Pearl Harbor that survived the attack were blown to bits for the film. This was all long before CGI.

But the production was plagued with disasters and eventually went well over budget. Zanuck and Williams initially hired Akira Kurosawa, the most famous Japanese director then and still, at least to Western audiences, but then fired him when he behaved bizarrely on the set. Two pilots were killed.

The logistics of creating this hydra-headed cinematic beast in the pre-internet era, with multiple locations in Japan, Hawaii,

By **WENDELL JAMIESON**

Los Angeles Times

Wendell Jamieson, a communications and political consultant, spent 18 years at The New York Times, where he wrote occasionally on film.



Washington and Hollywood, proved daunting; delays were rampant, as were communication breakdowns. Footage had to be flown across the Pacific strapped to seats on Japan Airlines.

Is it a great film? No. The long windup to the attack can seem tiresome if you are not, like me, fascinated by Pearl Harbor and the forces and events that led up to it. The Japanese sequences are much better done than the American ones—even though the American director was Richard Fleischer, a highly respected filmmaker known for crisp action, epic set pieces and fast-moving plots. The American scenes have a stilted, wooden quality, with characters standing around awkwardly and spouting exposition at one another.

And yet ... the film still fascinates me. And it's not just the battleships and airplanes.

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was among the most calamitous mistakes a modern nation has ever made. The militarists in charge of the government drove the country to ruin. "Tora" doesn't try to sugarcoat that; indeed, it's a Japanese character—Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto, played with understated elegance by the actor Soh Yamamura—who vocalizes the scale of this error.

"Tora" looks great today on Blu-ray, a revelation compared with that long-ago, all-blue television. The wooden battleship, which doesn't look wooden at all, is especially impressive on screen. Perhaps I'll revisit the film this week and have a toast to Bob. Or maybe it would be more fitting to watch it some cloudy afternoon.

A crisis of masculinity as robots replace men

It's not easy being female. But it's often no picnic being male either. The world is changing faster than ever and, with it, so are notions of masculinity. Many men are feeling unmoored, for better or worse.

If you happen to be James Bond, you take this flux in stride and effortlessly turn—via a few intermediary incarnations—from the Sean Connery version of manhood into the more vulnerable and complex Daniel Craig variety. But how many real-life men have an inner 007 to channel?

The reality for many of those who aren't necessarily alpha males is bleaker. The U.S., for example, just counted record numbers of deaths from drug overdoses—more than 100,000 in one year and roughly double the number in 2015. And about 70% of those who died were men.

In China, the government worries about a "masculinity crisis," as the nation's boys allegedly become effeminate, whatever that might mean nowadays. Educators are pondering ways of strengthening the "yang spirit"—as in the masculine-ish yang that complements the more feminine yin force in Taoism.

Some experts in Germany use the exact same phrase—a "crisis of masculinity"—to describe the situation of men in what used to be communist East Germany. For decades after reunification in 1990, eastern women moved west or married western men, leaving many of the region's males single, frustrated and alienated.

Reunification and its discontents may be a unique situation, but it appears that there's something more general about modernity that can undermine and threaten manhood. Consider, for example, how one particular vector of change is slamming into masculinity: the automation of manufacturing with robots.

In general, I think of robots as a boon. They make production more efficient and, therefore, all of us better off. But even good things aren't usually good for everybody. With automation, the losers are the blue-collar manufacturing workers who used to do

what the robots now take care of. And those workers are overwhelmingly men. That's not me throwing stereotypes around; that's hard statistics.

By contrast, jobs in the service sector, and especially those where "people skills" are prized, aren't threatened by robots at all, at least not yet. And here women appear to have a statistical edge. In economies where robots are used a lot, blue-collar men therefore find it harder on average to keep or find good employment, whereas women on balance fare better.

This bifurcation in prospects for men and women translates into a shrinkage in the wage gap that traditionally favored men. In general, that's a good thing, of course, as it leads to fair rewards—equal pay for equal work. But a vanishing wage gap also has side effects, as the late Gary Becker, a Nobel laureate in economics, famously explained.

In "A Theory of Marriage," published in 1973, he introduced the notion that a shrinking male-female wage gap reduces the value of wedlock to women. Back when the lads made a killing and the lasses made a pittance, it made sense—economically, at least—to "specialize" within a household consisting of a working husband and a wife, and maybe children. Once women earn better wages, however, they no longer gain much from tying themselves to men, at least not in the same way.

The consequence of Becker's logic should be an observable bear market in the marriage value of men, leading to less matrimony and fewer births in wedlock (though not necessarily fewer births overall). And so it appears. The coal country of Appalachia, for example, had a boom in the 1970s and a bust in the 1980s. As predicted, marriage rates and births in wedlock increased in the 1970s when (largely male) coal miners did well, then decreased in the 1980s when they struggled.

Enter Massimo Anelli, Osea Giuntella and Luca Stella—researchers, respectively, at Bocconi University in Milan, the University of Pittsburgh and the Free University of Berlin. Us-

By **ANDREAS KLUTH**

Bloomberg Opinion

Andreas Kluth is a columnist for Bloomberg Opinion. He was previously editor in chief of Handelsblatt Global and a writer for the Economist. He's the author of Hannibal and Me.



ing data from the U.S., they found that the more robotics transformed manufacturing in a given region, the smaller the income gaps between women and men. Marriages declined, divorce and cohabitation increased. Marital fertility also decreased, while out-of-wedlock births increased.

There's nothing inherently good or bad about such correlations and trends. They just mean that societies are changing. But change is hard for people. And men, as they lose the roles their fathers and grandfathers might have considered self-evidently masculine, appear to be at particular risk.

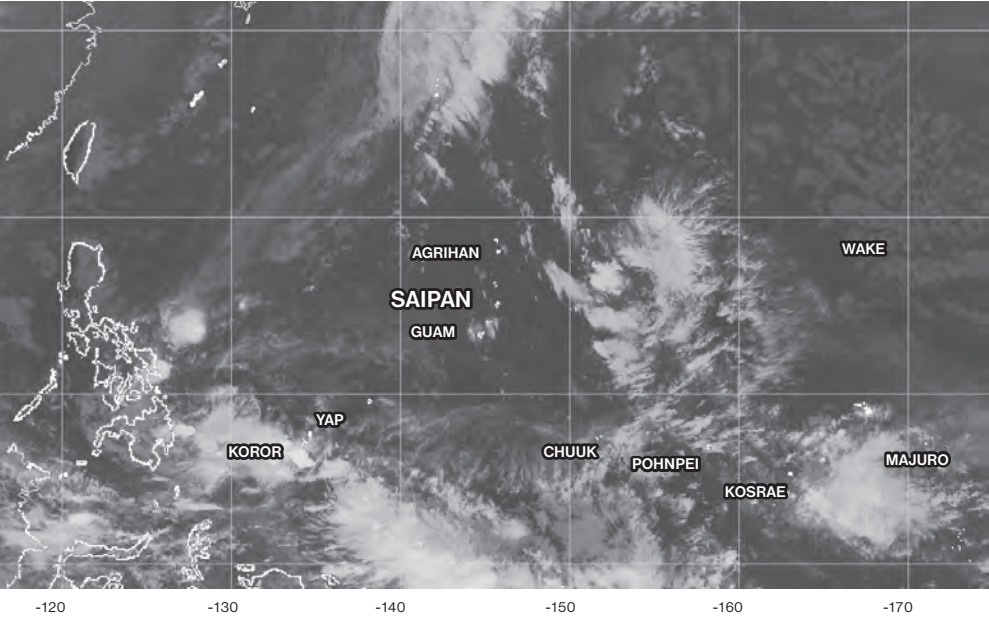
One is that they fall prey to demagogues on the far right. In eastern Germany, male frustration is certainly one explanation for the rise of the Alternative for Germany, a populist party. In the U.S., regions with lots of robots were among those where Trumpism is big.

A related phenomenon is the misogynistic "incel" movement of men who label themselves as "involuntary celibates." They often radicalize themselves online, blame women for their low status and spread conspiracy theories. In California, Florida and Toronto, incels have gone on killing sprees.

The best advice to individual men would seem to be to welcome the evolution of masculinity as a liberation—let's stop worrying about it and flow with it. But, for communities and societies, the flux in manhood bears dangers. This Chinese talk of strengthening the yang spirit seems corny and amiss. Even so, it bears remembering that yin and yang must be in balance to have harmony.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
86°	76°	87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	78°	86°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:18 AM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Partly cloudy skies, isolated showers and moderate trade winds are seen this morning across the Marianas. Seas at the Ipan buoy are hovering around 8 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Friday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Saturday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Sunday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM
Monday	6:33 AM	5:48 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:21 AM	9:55 PM	-
Friday	11:12 AM	10:55 PM	-
Saturday	11:57 AM	11:50 PM	-
Sunday	-	12:41 AM	1:14 PM
Monday	-	1:30 AM	1:49 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°	
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 25°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	72° / 57°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 68°	
London	Rain	55° / 36°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	80° / 51°	
Manila	Rain	84° / 75°	
Melbourne	Showers	64° / 50°	
Miami	Thunderstorms	81° / 72°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	47° / 33°	
Osaka	Rain	48° / 37°	
Paris	Rain	48° / 37°	
Busan	Sunny	43° / 30°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	57° / 46°	
Salem	Cloudy	50° / 35°	
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	63° / 45°	
Seoul	Sunny	34° / 23°	
Tokyo	Showers	50° / 37°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	48° / 33°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
5:23 AM	Low Tide	-0.56	
12:58 PM	High Tide	1.75	
6:37 PM	Low Tide	1.10	
10:41 PM	High Tide	1.48	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

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Business

Major outage hits Amazon Web Services; many sites affected

Amazon's cloud-service network suffered a major outage Tuesday, the company said, disrupting access to many popular sites. The service provides remote computing services to many governments, universities and companies, including The Associated Press.

Roughly five hours after numerous companies and other organizations began reporting issues with Amazon Web Services, the company said in a post on the AWS status page that it had "mitigated" the underlying problem responsible for the outage. Shortly thereafter, it reported that "many services have already recovered" but noted that others were still working toward full recovery.

The issue primarily affected Amazon web services in the eastern U.S., it said. Problems began midmorning on the U.S. East Coast, said Doug Madory, director of internet analysis at Kentik Inc, a network intelligence firm—among them, Amazon's own e-commerce operations.

In a statement, Amazon spokesperson Richard Rocha confirmed that Amazon's ware-

house and delivery operations had also experienced issues as a result of the AWS outage. Rocha added that the company is "working to resolve the issue as quickly as possible."

Customers trying to book or change trips with Delta Air Lines had trouble connecting to the airline. "Delta is working quickly to restore functionality to our AWS-supported phone lines," said spokesperson Morgan Durrant. The airline apologized and encouraged customers to use its website or mobile app instead.

Dallas-based Southwest Airlines said it switched to West Coast servers after some airport-based systems were affected by the outage. Customers were still reporting outages to DownDetector, a popular clearinghouse for user outage reports, more than three hours after they started. Southwest spokesman Brian Parrish said there were no major disruptions to flights.

Toyota spokesman Scott Vazin said the company's U.S. East Region for dealer services went down. The company has apps that access inventory data, monthly payment



A pedestrian walks near the Amazon Spheres on the company's corporate campus in downtown Seattle, Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. AP

calculators, service bulletins and other items. More than 20 apps were affected.

Also according to DownDetector, people trying to use Instacart, Venmo, Kindle, Roku, and Disney+ reported issues. The McDonald's app was also down. But the airlines American, United, Alaska and JetBlue

were unaffected. Kentik saw a 26% drop in traffic to Netflix, among major web-based services affected by the outage.

Madory said he did not believe the outage was anything nefarious. He said a recent cluster of outages at providers that host major websites reflects how the networking

industry has evolved. "More and more these outages end up being the product of automation and centralization of administration," he said. "This ends up leading to outages that are hard to completely avoid due to operational complexity but are very impactful when they happen."

Technologist and public data access activist Carl Malamud said the outage highlights just how badly the internet's original design goal—to be a distributed network with no central point of failure, making it resilient to mass disasters such as nuclear attack—has been warped by Big Tech.

"When we put everything in one place, be it Amazon's cloud or Facebook's monolith, we're violating that fundamental principle," said Malamud, who developed the internet's first radio station and later put a vital U.S. Security and Exchange Commission database online. "We saw that when Facebook became the instrument of a massive disinformation campaign, we just saw that today with the Amazon failure."

It was unclear how, or whether, the outage was affecting the federal government. The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency said in an email response to questions that it was working with Amazon "to understand any potential impacts this outage may have for federal agencies or other partners." (AP)

BUSINESS BRIEFS

EPA lowers ethanol requirements, citing reduced demand

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration on Tuesday lowered annual production requirements for ethanol and other biofuels to account for reduced demand as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. At the same time, the administration moved to reject requests by small oil refineries to be exempted from ethanol requirements, saying they had failed to show exemptions were justified under the Clean Air Act. Taken together, the actions reflect the administration's "commitment to reset and strengthen" the federal Renewable Fuel Standard, or RFS, "following years of mismanagement" by the Trump administration and disruptions to the gasoline market stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said.

Zuckerberg, Chan to invest up to \$3.4B for science advances

The company that runs the philanthropy of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, is investing up to \$3.4 billion to advance human health over 10 to 15 years, according to a spokesperson for the organization. The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, or CZI, announced

Tuesday its new effort is aiming to "observe, measure, and analyze any biological process throughout the human body—across spatial scales and in real time." The philanthropy, which has a mission of curing, preventing or managing all disease by the end of the century, said in its announcement that it will focus its science work over the next 10 years on developing new research, institutes and technologies that can help its mission. (PR)

Mediator ousted in Boy Scouts bankruptcy; deadline extended

DOVER, Del. (AP)—The judge presiding over the Boy Scouts of America bankruptcy issued a ruling Tuesday removing a former Delaware bankruptcy judge as a mediator, saying a court filing by the Boy Scouts raised questions about his impartiality. Judge Laura Selber Silverstein removed Kevin Carey as one of the mediators tasked with trying to help opposing parties in the case resolve various disputes and reach settlement agreements. Mr. Carey is no longer a mediator," Silverstein said during a brief online hearing, noting that she had even considered terminating the mediation process entirely. The removal of

Carey, who retired as a judge in 2019, leaves only one of the three mediators who had been appointed by the judge last year.

Rohingya sue Facebook for \$150B, alleging role in violence

LONDON (AP)—Rohingya refugees sued social network powerhouse Facebook for more than \$150 billion, accusing it of failing to stop hate speech that incited violence against the Muslim ethnic group by military rulers and their supporters in Myanmar. Years after coming under scrutiny for contributing to ethnic and religious violence in Myanmar, recently revealed internal Facebook documents show the company still has problems defining and moderating hate speech and misinformation on its platform in the country. The breaches have even been exploited by hostile actors since the Feb. 1 military takeover this year that resulted in human rights abuses across the country. The Rohingyas' claims were fortified by the revelations in internal company documents that former Facebook employee and whistleblower Frances Haugen provided this fall to Congress and U.S. securities regulators.

Japan economy contracts 3.6% in 3Q on weaker spending, trade

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's economy contracted at a 3.6% annual rate in July-September, according to a revised estimate released Wednesday.

The downgraded growth estimate for the last quarter, down from an earlier report of a 3.0% contraction, reflected weaker consumer spending and trade, the government said.

In quarterly terms, the measure used for most economies, the economy contracted 0.9%, compared to the earlier estimate of a 0.8% contraction.

Hawaii recoups from big storm amid lingering flood threats

HONOLULU (AP)—A slow-moving storm that knocked out power, swamped dozens of homes and sent creeks and streams surging had mostly passed over Hawaii on Tuesday, though the threat of flooding lingered in some already-drenched areas.

Showers were tapering off on Oahu, where Pearl Harbor survivors gathered under overcast skies for an 80th anniversary event. The island had received between 6 and 10 inches (15 and 25 centimeters) of rainfall since Monday, but isolated bands of rain were still possible.

A threat of heavy rain continued for the island of Kauai.

The unusually strong winter storm clobbered Hawaii for several days, knocking out power to 42,000 people on

The world's third-largest economy has been mired in recession and struggling to recover from the impact of waves of coronavirus infections.

The latest outbreak, in the late summer, has receded for now with a sharp drop in cases. But it hit during the usually busy summer travel season, with calls for restricted business activity and travel hurting restaurants, hotels and other service sector industries. The data showed a lower level of private inventories than earlier reported,

weaker government spending and business investment and weaker consumer spending. It also showed wages contracted by 0.4%, instead of growing by 0.1% as earlier reported.

Japan's Cabinet has approved a record 56 trillion yen, or \$490 billion stimulus package, including cash handouts and aid to ailing businesses, to help the economy out of the doldrums worsened by the coronavirus pandemic. Parliamentary approval of the plan is expected this month.

Maui and the Big Island, according to the Hawaiian Electric Company. Outages were also reported on other islands, though it wasn't immediately clear how many were affected.

On Tuesday, the Honolulu Fire Department reported responding to nearly 100 storm-related incidents within 24 hours, including 55 flooded homes. Ten people were also saved from flash flooding: Five boys ages 9 and 10 were pulled from a raging creek Monday; another five people were later rescued from a different stream, and one was sent to a hospital, the agency said. The department also responded to two landslides and four wind-torn roofs.

Several schools were closed on Oahu due to the severe weather. And widespread pow-

er outages were reported on the island, including in downtown Honolulu, where utility crews were working to restore electricity after a substation flooded. Police were directing traffic at busy cross streets where traffic lights were out.

Four shelters had been opened on Oahu, where normally busy beaches remained mostly empty Tuesday morning. The storm system was expected to move out of Hawaii on Wednesday, two days after Gov. David Ige issued a state of emergency for all the islands.

The Big Island and Maui were mostly clear of the heaviest rain by Tuesday morning.

On Maui, power outages and flooding were reported in previous days, with more than a foot (30 centimeters) of rain falling in some areas.

Nation

Biden, Putin square off as tension grows on Ukraine border

WASHINGTON (AP)—Face to face for over two hours, President Joe Biden and Russia's Vladimir Putin squared off in a secure video call Tuesday as the U.S. president put Moscow on notice that an invasion of Ukraine would bring sanctions and enormous harm to the Russian economy.

With tens of thousands of Russian troops massed on the Ukraine border, the highly anticipated call between the two leaders came amid growing worries by the U.S. and Western allies about Russia's threat to its neighbor.

Putin, for his part, came into the meeting seeking guarantees from Biden that the NATO mili-

tary alliance will never expand to include Ukraine, which has long sought membership. The Americans and their NATO allies said that request was a non-starter.

There appeared to be no immediate breakthroughs to ease tensions on the Ukraine question, as the U.S. emphasized a need for diplomacy and de-escalation, and issued stern threats to Russia on the consequences of an invasion.

Biden "told President Putin directly that if Russia further invades Ukraine, the United States and our European allies would respond with strong economic measures," U.S. National Security

Adviser Jake Sullivan said after the call.

He added that Biden said the U.S. would also "provide additional defensive materiel to the Ukrainians ... and we would fortify our NATO allies on the eastern flank with additional capabilities in response to such an escalation."

That could include additional deployments of U.S. troops to eastern European NATO allies, the adviser said.

A top U.S. envoy, Victoria Nuland, said a Russian invasion of Ukraine also would jeopardize a controversial pipeline between Russia and Germany. She told the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Tuesday that if Russia invaded, "our expectation is that the pipeline will be suspended."

Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov dismissed the sanctions threat during a conference call with reporters.

"While the U.S. president talked about possible sanctions, our president emphasized what Russia needs," Ushakov said. "Sanctions aren't something new, they have been in place for a long time and will not have any effect."

He described the presidents' video conference as "candid and businesslike," adding that they also exchanged occasional jokes.

ACROSS THE NATION

6 charged with running deadly Mexico-based kidnapping ring

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Six people were charged Tuesday with running a Mexico-based kidnapping ring that took nine people hostage and demanded ransom from their U.S. relatives but killed six of them, including some after the money was paid, officials said. A federal grand jury in Los Angeles charged the alleged ringleader, German Garcia Yera Hernandez, 37, and five others with crimes including extortion and conspiracy to commit hostage taking resulting in death, according to a statement from the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles. All six were being held in Mexico, where they face additional charges, and it wasn't immediately clear whether they had attorneys to speak on their behalf. The indictment alleges that from January to April of last year, the Tijuana-based gang took people for ransom in Mexico by luring them into meetings where they were taken hostage at gunpoint, tied up and sometimes badly beaten.

Ex-Montana police chief pleads guilty to child porn charge

GREAT FALLS, Mont. (AP) — A former Montana police chief pleaded guilty Tuesday to distributing child pornography via social media, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Montana said. William Daly Harrington, 43, entered his guilty plea before U.S. District Judge Brian Morris, who scheduled sentencing for April 13. A plea agreement calls for three other charges to be dismissed. Harrington spent about 12 years with the East Helena Police Department and was promoted to chief in April 2019. After pleading guilty, Harrington was released pending sentencing. He faces a mandatory minimum sentence of five years to 20 years in prison, prosecutors said.

Dole honored with events in DC, his hometown, Kansas capital

Bob Dole will be honored Friday in a private memorial service attended by President Joe Biden as well as a public service at the World War II Memorial in Washington before the casket of the former presidential candidate and decorated soldier travels to Kansas for events in his hometown and the state capital. Dole's casket will lie in state Thursday at the U.S. Capitol. Biden will join former presidents, current and former leaders in Congress, friends and the Dole family for the private service Friday morning at Washington National Cathedral, according to the Dole Institute of Politics. The public event later at the World War II Memorial will include remarks by actor Tom Hanks as well as Mark Milley, the former chairman of the U.S. military's Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dole died Sunday at the age of 98. He served 36 years in Congress, rising to U.S. Senate majority leader. He was the 1996 Republican nominee for president, losing to incumbent Democrat Bill Clinton. (AP)

Woman says Maxwell abused her at age 14

NEW YORK (AP)—One of Ghislaine Maxwell's accusers testified Tuesday that she was just 14 years old when the British socialite had her undress, fondled her and told her she had a "great body" that financier Jeffrey Epstein would enjoy. The woman, who was identified only by her first name, Carolyn, was the third witness to testify at the sex trafficking trial about being sexually abused by Epstein in encounters facilitated by Maxwell, his one-time girlfriend and, later, employee. Carolyn offered some of the most explicit descriptions so far at the New York trial of Maxwell's alleged grooming of underage victims, who prosecutors say were lured into "a pyramid scheme of abuse."

Pearl Harbor survivors gather on 80th anniversary of attack

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP)—A few dozen survivors of Pearl Harbor and other veterans gathered Tuesday at the site of the bombing 80 years ago to remember those killed in the attack by Japan that launched the U.S. into World War II.

The USS Chung-Hoon, a guided missile destroyer, passed in front of the pier with its sailors "manning the rails," or lining the ship's edge, to honor the World War II veterans present.

David Russell, a 101-year-old from Albany, Oregon, who survived the attack while on the USS Oklahoma, stood to salute to the destroyer on behalf of the veterans.

Herb Elfring, 99, said he was glad to return to Pearl Harbor considering he almost didn't live through the aerial assault.

"It was just plain good to get back and be able to participate in the remembrance of the day," Elfring told reporters over the weekend.

Elfring was in the Army, assigned to the 251st Coast Artillery, part of the California National Guard on Dec. 7, 1941. He recalled Japanese planes flying overhead and bullets strafing his Army base at Camp Malakole, a few miles down the coast from Pearl Harbor.

Elfring, who lives in Jackson, Michigan, said he has returned to



World War II veterans are honored for their service during a Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day ceremony on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021, in Honolulu. AP

Hawaii about 10 times to attend the annual memorial ceremony hosted by the Navy and the National Park Service.

About 30 survivors and about 100 other veterans of the war joined him this year. Veterans stayed home last year due to the coronavirus pandemic and watched a livestream of the event instead. Most attendees this year wore masks.

They observed a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., the same minute the attack began decades ago.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro recounted in his keynote address how Petty Officer 1st Class Joe George tossed a line to the USS Arizona that six men trapped by fire in the battleship's control tower used to cross to his ship, the USS Vestal. Five of the

six survived. Among them was Donald Stratton of Red Cloud, Nebraska, who died last year. Del Toro said he recently met with Stratton's family.

"We sometimes talk about our victory in World War II as though it was inevitable. Only a matter of time. But there was nothing inevitable about one sailor's decision to toss that line," Del Toro said.

Judge blocks Biden vaccine mandate for federal contractors

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and DAVID A. LIEB
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A federal judge on Tuesday blocked President Joe Biden's administration from enforcing a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for employees of federal contractors, the latest in a string of victories for Republican-led states pushing back against Biden's pandemic policies.

U.S. District Court Judge R. Stan Baker, in Augusta, Georgia, issued a stay to bar enforcement of the mandate nationwide.

The order came in response

to a lawsuit from several contractors and seven states—Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, South Carolina, Utah and West Virginia. It applies across the U.S. because one of those challenging the order is the trade group Associated Builders and Contractors Inc., whose members do business nationwide.

Baker found that the states are likely to succeed in their claim that Biden exceeded authorization from Congress when he is-



Biden

sued the requirement in September.

"The Court acknowledges the tragic toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought throughout the nation and the globe," wrote the judge, an appointee of former President Donald Trump. "However, even in times of crisis this Court must preserve the rule of law and ensure that all branches of government act within the bounds of their constitutionally granted authorities."

A White House spokeswoman

said the Justice Department would continue to defend the mandate.

"The reason that we proposed these requirements is that we know they work, and we are confident in our ability, legally, to make these happen across the country," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said at Tuesday's briefing.

A federal judge in Kentucky also had issued a preliminary injunction against the mandate last week, but it applied only to contractors in three states that had sued together—Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee.

Asia

S. Korea's daily virus jump exceeds 7,000 for 1st time

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—New coronavirus infections in South Korea exceeded 7,000 for the first time since the start of the pandemic on Wednesday as hours-long lines snaked around testing stations in the capital Seoul amid a worsening virus crisis.

More than 5,600 of the new 7,175 cases were reported in Seoul and the nearby metropolitan region, where a delta-driven surge has led to a shortage of hospital beds and strained an already depleted health care workforce.

The country's death toll exceeded 4,000 after 63 virus patients died in the past 24 hours. The 840 patients in serious or critical conditions were an all-time high, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said.

"Last week, the level of daily increase reached 5,000 and today the tally came out over 7,000 — the viral spread has been fierce," Prime Minister



People queue in line to wait for the coronavirus testing at a makeshift testing site in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021. AP

Kim Boo-kyum, Seoul's No. 2 behind President Moon Jae-in, said during a virus meeting.

"The greater capital region is where 80% of the infections have been concentrated. While we have been working with hospitals to increase the number of hospital beds (designated for COVID-19 treatment), we have been unable to catch up with the speed of transmissions," he said.

Officials have been scrambling

to administer booster shots and they are monitoring a larger number of mild cases at home to preserve hospital beds for patients who are sicker.

Wednesday's daily infection tally was 1,800 more than the previous one-day record of 5,352 set on Saturday, illustrating how the delta variant has ripped through the country after it loosened social distancing rules in November to address economic concerns.

Australia joins diplomatic boycott of Beijing Games

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Wednesday that Australia will join the U.S. in a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Games over human rights concerns.

Morrison said it should come as no surprise that Australian officials would boycott the event after the nation's relationship with China had broken down in recent years.

"I'm doing it because it's in Australia's national interest," Morrison said. "It's the right thing to do."

He said Australian athletes

would still be able to compete.

As well as citing human rights abuses, Morrison said China had been very critical of Australia's efforts to have a strong defense force in the region "particularly in relation, most recently, to our decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines."



Morrison

He said his government was very happy to talk to China about their differences.

"There's been no obstacle to that occurring on our side, but the Chinese government has consistently not accepted those opportunities for us to meet," Morrison said.

Rights groups have pushed

for a full-blown boycott of the Games, accusing China of rights abuses against ethnic minorities. The U.S. and Australian decisions fall short of those calls but come at an exceptionally turbulent time for international relations and have been met with a barrage of criticism from China.

The Australian Olympic Committee said the arrangements for the 40 or so Australian athletes expected to compete at the Games would not be impacted by Morrison's announcement.

"Getting the athletes to Beijing safely, competing safely and bringing them home safely remains our greatest challenge," said Matt Carroll, the committee's chief executive.

NZ man pleads guilty to stabbing 4 in supermarket

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—A New Zealand man who couldn't afford to buy beer at a supermarket pleaded guilty Wednesday to stabbing and injuring four people at the store during a frenzied attack.

Luke James Lambert, 42, will face up to 14 years in prison when he is sentenced next year on four counts of attempted murder.

Shoppers and staff at the Countdown supermarket in the city of Dunedin were praised for their bravery during the May attack after au-

thorities said they managed to stop the man from hurting others. Three of the victims suffered severe wounds but all have since recovered.

Less than four months after the attack by Lambert, an extremist inspired by the Islamic State group stabbed shoppers at an Auckland supermarket in an unrelated attack, injuring seven before he was shot and killed by police.

In the earlier attack, prosecutors said Lambert visited the supermarket and bought a soda drink but didn't have

enough money to buy two cans of beer, according to the Otago Daily Times newspaper.

He later complained to an associate about not getting access to medication, although authorities could find no evidence he was denied any prescription drugs.

"Someone's going to get it," Lambert told his associate, according to the newspaper.

Lambert then returned to the store and grabbed a pack of four knives from a shelf and slashed the face of a worker who was stocking items in the pharmacy aisle.

World

France arrests suspect in killing of Saudi journalist

PARIS (AP)—A suspect in the 2018 killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was arrested Tuesday in France, according to a French judicial official.

The official said the suspect was being held on the basis of a Turkish arrest warrant. He requested not being named in accordance with the French justice system's customary practices.

French radio RTL said the Saudi national, Khalid Aedh al-Otaibi, was arrested at the Roissy airport near Paris as he was trying to board a flight to Riyadh.

Al-Otaibi was one of over a dozen Saudi officials sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury in 2018 over Khashoggi's killing and dismemberment at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018.

He was also mentioned in the declassified U.S. intelligence report that said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had "approved" the operation that killed Khashoggi. The report used

an alternate English transliteration of his last name.

The Saudi Embassy in Paris said the arrested man "had nothing to do with the case in question," and said the embassy expects his immediate release. It noted that Saudi Arabia already held a trial over the killing, though it was behind closed doors and



Khashoggi

the verdicts were criticized by rights groups and others for not holding to account or finding guilty anyone responsible behind organizing, ordering or overseeing the operation that killed Khashoggi.

French authorities were on Tuesday evening verifying the suspect's identity.

The director of media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Christophe Deloire, welcomed the news.

"Sometimes governments close their eyes about people who are pursued by justice in another country. I note with satisfaction that there was an arrest, and the police didn't close their eyes this time," he told The Associated Press.

Al-Otaibi "is someone we have been following for a long time," Deloire said. RSF has lobbied multiple governments to seek justice for Khashoggi's killing, and filed a lawsuit in Germany for crimes against humanity over the case.

There was no immediate comment from Turkey over the arrest.

French media report the suspect is going to be notified about the arrest warrant by a prosecutor on Wednesday. He can accept or refuse to be transferred to Turkey. If he refuses, a judge will decide whether he remains in custody pending the review of the case and a possible extradition process, which could take months.

The arrest comes as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman continues his first regional Gulf tour since the killing. He traveled Tuesday from Oman to the United Arab Emirates.

The prince met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday in Saudi Arabia. Macron said they notably had talks about human rights issues.

German convicted of castrating men on his kitchen table

BERLIN (AP)—A German court has convicted a 67-year-old electrician of aggravated, dangerous and simple assault for removing the testicles of several men at their request, causing one person to die, the dpa news agency reported Tuesday.

A Munich regional court sentenced the man to eight years and six months in prison. The defendant, whose name wasn't released for privacy reasons, had initially also been charged with murder by omission but prosecutors later dropped that charge.

The defendant had admitted during the trial to offering "castrations" on sado-masochistic websites and said several men paid him money for torturing them and removing their testicles, dpa reported.

During the trial, the man had told the court that he performed these operations on his kitchen table in the town of Markt Schwaben, telling his victims that he was a trained medical professional, according to dpa.

The defendant told the court that he castrated or par-

tially amputated the genitals of eight men between July 2018 and March 2020. But he denied responsibility for the death of one man, who died several days after the defendant performed a procedure on him.

The dead man's body was found in a box by police three weeks later.

Prosecutors had demanded eleven years in prison for aggravated and dangerous bodily injury. The defendant's lawyers had asked the court to sentence him to no more than seven years.

WORLD BRIEFS

Burundi says prison fire kills 38 inmates in Gitega

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Burundi's government says 38 prisoners have been killed in a fire Tuesday morning in Gitega, the country's political capital. Vice President Prosper Bazombanza announced the deaths. More than 60 other people have been injured and the death toll could rise. The prison in Gitega is overcrowded with

more than 1,500 inmates in cells designed to hold 400, according to local reports.

Illegal fireworks shop explodes in Mexico, killing 6 people

MEXICO CITY (AP) — An illegal fireworks shop blew up east of Mexico City, killing two children and four adults and injuring an undetermined number of people, authorities said Tuesday. Photographs of the scene distributed by

the country's National Guard showed burned-out vehicles and single-story brick and concrete homes with their walls blasted out. Ana Lucia Hill, the health secretary for the state of Puebla, said the deaths occurred in the hamlet of Santiago Tenango, just east of the state capital, which is also named Puebla. The blast occurred late Monday, and the force of the explosion turned brick-fill walls into heaps of rubble.

Environment

Test feeding plan in works for starving Florida manatees

St. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Normally giving food to wild animals is considered off limits, but the dire situation in Florida with more than 1,000 manatees dying from starvation due to man-made pollution is leading officials to consider an unprecedented feeding plan.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state environmental officials intend to unveil a limited proposal this week to feed the beloved marine mammals in one specific Florida location to test how it works. This is not usually done with any wild animal, but the situation has become such an emergency that it has to be considered, said Save The Manatee Club Executive Director Patrick Rose.

The club was co-founded in 1981 by Florida troubadour Jimmy Buffet and former governor and U.S. Sen. Bob Graham.

"It's the entire ecosystem that is affected by this and will be affected for a decade to come," Rose said in an interview Tuesday. "This is a necessary stopgap measure. It is a problem created by man and man is going to have to solve it."

A Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman said in an email that the agency "does



In this Dec. 28, 2010, file photo, a group of manatees are in a canal where discharge from a nearby Florida Power & Light plant warms the water in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

have approval to move forward on a limited feeding trial" but that details are not yet finalized. A formal announcement is expected later this week.

The emerging plan would involve feeding manatees at a Florida Power & Light plant in Cape Canaveral,

along the Indian River Lagoon on the east coast where manatees congregate in cold winter months because of the warm water discharge from the plant. It would be an experiment involving lettuce, cabbage, and other greens delivered in a controlled manner such as via a conveyor belt, Rose said.

People would not be authorized to simply start tossing lettuce into a Florida bay some place.

"Under no circumstances do we want people feeding manatees. It's illegal, and re-

mains so," Rose said.

Manatees have long struggled to survive with humans. Hundreds of the slow-moving animals are struck every year by boats, which has led to no-wake manatee zones throughout Florida

with violations punishable by significant fines. But the starvation threat has led to a record 1,017 manatee deaths as of Nov. 19, according to state figures.

As winter looms, even in Florida, another bad year is expected.

This has been caused mainly by runoff from farms, urban areas and sewage that promotes growth of blue-green algae and other harmful organisms. It chokes off light needed by seagrass, eliminating the main food source for manatees. Climate change that worsens the algae blooms is also a factor.

And it's not just manatees. People's health can be affected by the algae blooms along with the health of a wide range of aquatic creatures, from crabs to dolphins. Aside from protecting the animals, there is an economic loss for boat captains, sightseeing tours and others who flock to Florida for the chance to see these creatures.

"Literally, saving manatees is part of saving the ecosystem. If we can get this taken care of, manatees will flourish. If we don't, they won't," Rose said. "We are in the most critical position."

Endangered whale gives birth while entangled in fishing rope

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP)—Scientists spotted an endangered right whale dragging a length of fishing rope caught in its mouth as it swam with a newborn calf off the Georgia coast, a rare confirmation of a birth by an entangled whale that experts determined they can't safely attempt to help.

The baby whale appeared healthy and uninjured when an aerial survey team spotted it Thursday alongside its ensnared mother near Cumberland Island, Georgia, said Clay George, a wildlife biologist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

It was the second newborn right whale confirmed in the Atlantic waters of the Southeastern U.S. during the species' calving season that typically runs from December through March.

North Atlantic right whales are critically endangered, with scientists estimating that fewer than 350 survive. Adult females migrate to warmer waters off Georgia and Florida each winter to give birth. George said he's only aware of one other confirmed re-

port, from January 2011, of an entangled right whale being seen with a newborn—and that one ultimately managed to free itself.

The female whale spotted last week, identified by the unique markings on its head, has been dragging a fishing rope at least since March. That's when it was first reported entangled in Cape Cod Bay, off the coast of Massachusetts. Wildlife experts managed to shorten the rope before the whale headed south, but weren't able to free it.

"We haven't seen a chronically entangled whale come down here from up north and have a calf," George said, adding: "It's amazing. But on the other hand, it could ultimately be a death sentence for her."

That's because the mother whale may struggle both to nurse her calf and still have the energy needed to keep dragging the fishing line while also trying to recover from potential injuries to its mouth, George said. Female right whales typically gorge

themselves in the waters where they feed and mate off New England and Canada before heading south to give birth. They won't eat again until they return—a round trip that can take three months or longer.

Trained responders in a boat approached the mother whale and calf on Thursday. After consulting with other experts, George said, the response team concluded any attempt to remove or further shorten the fishing rope would pose too great a risk to both the whales and the boat crew.

Spotters who scan the waters daily for whales and their babies during the calving season plan to keep an eye out for the pair.

"My concern is she's still got two pieces of rope, about 20 feet, coming out from the left side of her mouth," George said. "If those two pieces of rope ended up getting knotted around each other and there's a loop, you could imagine that calf could end up becoming entangled."

Researchers try producing potato resistant to climate change

BANGOR, Maine (AP)—University of Maine researchers are trying to produce potatoes that can better withstand warming temperatures as the climate changes.

Warming temperatures and an extended growing season can lead to quality problems and disease, Gregory Porter, a professor of crop ecology and management, told the Bangor Daily News.

"The predictions for climate change are heavier rainfall events, and potatoes don't tolerate flooding or wet conditions for long without having other quality problems," Porter said. "If we want potatoes to be continued to be produced successfully in Maine, we need to be able to produce varieties that can be resistant to change."

Around the world, research aimed at mitigating crop damage is underway. A NASA study published this month suggested climate change may affect the production of corn and wheat, with corn yields projected to decline while wheat could see potential growth, as soon as 2030 under a high greenhouse gas emissions scenario.

Maine is coming off of a banner potato crop thanks in



Potatoes await harvesting at Green Thumb Farms, Sept. 27, 2017, in Fryeburg, Maine.

part to the success of the Caribou russet, which was developed by UMaine researchers. But Porter fears that even that variety isn't as heat tolerant as necessary to resist the future effects of climate change.

Pests are another factor. The Colorado potato beetle and disease-spreading aphids have flourished with the changing climate, said Jim Dill, pest management specialist at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Breeding seemingly small changes like hairier leaves that make it difficult for insects to move around on the plant can cut down on pests' destruction and also the need for pesti-

cides, he said.

Breeding such characteristics into potatoes is a long process of cross-pollinating different potato varieties.

The process is well underway.

They're in a research testing phase right now at sites throughout the United States. Test potatoes in Virginia, North Carolina and Florida are testing high temperature stress.

"It takes 10 years of selection after that initial cross pollination, and it might take two to five years before enough commercial evaluation has taken place to release a new potato variety," Porter said.

Life & Style

‘Cheugy,’ ‘omicron’ among 2021’s most mispronounced words

By WILLIAM J. KOLE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

“Cheugy” is apparently a lot to chew on. Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Billie Eilish and Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce have something in common—broadcasters butcher their names.

And virtually everyone is having trouble with “omicron.”

All four made it onto this year’s list of most mispronounced words as compiled by the U.S. Captioning Company, which captions and subtitles real-time events on TV and in courtrooms.

The list released Tuesday identifies the words that proved most challenging for newsreaders and people on television to pronounce this year.

The caption company said it surveyed its members to generate the list, which is now in its sixth year and was commissioned by Babel, a language-learning platform with headquarters in Berlin and New York.

“Newscasters in the U.S. have struggled with 2021’s new words and names while reporting on key sporting events, viral internet trends and emerging celebrities,” said Esteban Touma, a standup comedian and teacher for Babel Live.

“As a language teacher, it’s always interesting to see that some of these terms are usually new colloquialisms, or are rooted or borrowed from another language,” he said. “As a non-native speaker, I must confess it’s fun to see English speakers stumbling a bit for a change.”

Here’s how Touma breaks down the proper pronunciations for the most commonly

misspoken words:

■ **Cheugy** (CHOO-gee): A trendy term popularized by Gen Z and used to mock an outdated and unfashionable aesthetic typically associated with millennials, such as “Live, Laugh, Love” signs.

■ **Chipotle** (chih-POHT-lay): The American fast food chain became the center of a viral trend this year challenging Baby Boomers to pronounce the name.

■ **Dalgona** (tal-goh-NAH): A Korean treat made with melted sugar and baking soda, popularized in Netflix’s “Squid Game.” (Touma notes that some speakers seem to produce a “K” instead of the “G” in the middle syllable.)

■ **Dogecoin** (DOHJ-coin): A divisive cryptocurrency that began somewhat ironically before being popularized by Elon Musk, causing its value to dramatically increase.

■ **Eilish** (EYE-lish): The singer Billie Eilish, whose album “Happier Than Ever” was released this year to critical acclaim and nominated for the Grammy Awards’ Album of the Year.

■ **Ethereum** (ih-THEE-ree-um): Another cryptocurrency that skyrocketed in value this year amid the decentralized-currency boom.

■ **Ever Given** (EV-er GIV-en): The name of the ship that blocked the Suez Canal in March, costing billions of dollars in lost trade. Many newscasters mistook the name of the ship as “Evergreen,” the name of the company that owns the vessel, which was printed on its hull.

■ **Glasgow** (GLAHZ-go): The host city of November’s United Nations Climate Con-



This combination of 2021 photos shows Philadelphia Eagles’ Jason Kelce, left, and Billie Eilish in London.



AP

ference was mispronounced by both President Joe Biden and former president Barack Obama.

■ **Kelce** (KELs): The Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce revealed on radio this year that his teammates and the media had been mispronouncing his name for years.

■ **Omicron** (AH-muh-kraan / OH-mee-kraan): A new variant of COVID-19 first identified in November, named in keeping with the World Health Organization’s system of identifying variants with Greek letters. (Touma notes it’s pronounced differently in the U.S. and the U.K.)

■ **Shein** (SHEE-in): The Chinese fast fashion company at the center of the “Shein haul” trend, in which participants record themselves trying on numerous different outfits from the company.

■ **Stefanos Tsitsipas** (STEHFuh-nohs TSEE-tsee-pas): Currently ranked as the world’s

No. 4 tennis player, the Greek athlete rose to international prominence when he lost to Novak Djokovic in the final of the French Open in June.

■ **Yassify** (YEAH-sih-fai): A popular trend in which multiple beauty filters are applied to well-known pictures or portraits for comic effect.

Closing arguments set in actor Jussie Smollett’s trial

CHICAGO (AP)—Closing arguments are scheduled for Wednesday morning in the case against former “Empire” actor Jussie Smollett, who is accused of staging a racist, anti-gay attack against himself in downtown Chicago to get publicity.

The jury is then expected to begin deliberating whether Smollett is guilty on six counts of a low-level felony for lying to Chicago police about the January 2019 attack.

Taking the witness stand earlier this week, Smollett repeatedly denied the attack was a

fake, telling a prosecutor “there was no hoax on my part” and that two brothers who testified against him are “liars.”

Smollett called the Osundairo brothers’ testimony that he paid them \$3,500 to carry out the fake attack “100% false,” and described how he

was the victim of a hate crime while walking in his neighborhood early on Jan. 29, 2019. He also testified that a \$3,500 check he wrote for Abimbola Osundairo was for meal and workout plans because he was trying to get toned for an upcoming music video.

Hot-and-cold boyfriend drops all communication

DEAR ABBY: I was in a relationship (nine months) up until about a month ago. Without going into a lot of detail, the guy I was seeing ghosted me without any warning. We had a great conversation on a Thursday night, and Friday morning he blocked my calls, email, etc. I have no idea what happened.

The night before, I accidentally FaceTimed him (my phone was in my pocket), and his son answered. I thought he had called me, but apparently, I called him. Keep in mind I had never met his son the entire time we were together. This isn’t the first time he has stopped speaking to me for reasons only he knows, but this is the first time he has gone this far.

I’m trying to move past it, but I’m having a hard time. Even though we dated for only nine months, I talked to him about everything, and we had such great times together. I want to understand why he did what he did to get some closure, but I don’t know what to do. Do I need to just let this go?

GHOSTED AGAIN IN ALABAMA

DEAR GHOSTED AGAIN: Your ex may have been upset because, until your FaceTime call, his son didn’t know he was seeing anyone. I’m not a mind reader, and neither are you. You stated that this isn’t the first time he has

clammed up and given you the silent treatment. A relationship based on such immaturity and poor communication skills would not be healthy for you anyway. Stanch your bleeding and move on. You have my sympathy.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My mother, who is 85, lives under the domination of my 88-year-old father. After retirement, Dad has remained active and has taken up hobbies that fill the entire house. Mom was an award-winning photographer, but medical issues now prevent her from enjoying that activity the way she used to. She has always enjoyed music and had a keyboard she felt comfortable playing, but only when Dad was away. My father tends to be very critical, which is why I think she would only play in private.

Recently, thinking Mom no longer used it, my dad donated her keyboard. He said it was taking up space. Mom recently confided to me that she was devastated when it happened. I would like to purchase another keyboard for Mom for her birthday, but I don’t want her to feel betrayed. I’m not sure if I should talk with Dad about it beforehand. He is sure to ask Mom why she wasn’t more vocal about her feelings in the first place, thus putting her in an uncomfortable position. Do you have any suggestions?

LOVING DAUGHTER IN WASHINGTON

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR DAUGHTER: Have a chat with dear old Dad. Tell him what you plan to do and why. If he expresses puzzlement about why you’re doing it, point out that between the two of them his is the dominant personality, which may be why your mother didn’t speak up on her own behalf. While you’re at it, suggest that the next time he has the urge to dispose of your mother’s property, he should first ask how she feels about it. It may be a wake-up call he needs.

To order “How to Write Letters for All Occasions,” send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

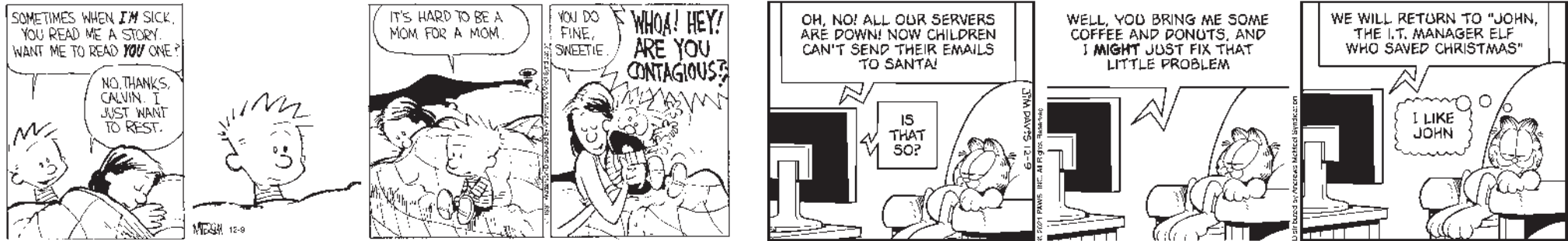
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Distant
- 4 Sloth's home
- 8 Bottle stopper
- 12 Colorful card game
- 13 Actor Gosling
- 14 — arms
- 15 Most boisterous
- 17 Low-calorie
- 18 Fella
- 19 Circus swing
- 21 Crystal-lined stones
- 24 Blunder
- 25 Altar constellation
- 26 Army address
- 28 Meadow
- 32 Breaks down
- 34 Nap site
- 36 Hit with a stun gun
- 37 Autumn pears
- 39 Shore concealer

DOWN

- 1 Indent key
- 42 Before
- 44 Royal emblems
- 46 Road to battle
- 50 "GMA" network
- 51 Cheer (for)
- 52 Intellectual
- 56 Pay to play
- 57 Jazzy
- 58 Sound of delight
- 59 Equal
- 60 Weaver's machine
- 61 Romance
- 21 Attire
- 22 Slangy suffix
- 23 Bro or sis
- 27 Ump
- 29 Admits to a mistake
- 30 Future atty.'s exam
- 31 Society newbies
- 33 Royal staff
- 35 Medico
- 38 Mexican Mrs.
- 40 Cracker type
- 43 Lucy's pal
- 45 Recede
- 46 Enfold
- 47 Top-of-the-line
- 48 Memory method
- 49 Hawaiian city
- 53 Day — paint
- 54 Tic-tac-toe win
- 55 One of the five W's

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-9

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Simon Helberg, 41; Kevin Daniels, 45; Donny Osmond, 64; Dame Judi Dench, 87.

Happy Birthday: Kindness and generosity will make you feel good, but don't be gullible. Pick who you help based on research, facts and your beliefs. You can make a difference this year, but you must protect your interests first. Be willing to let go of the past and head in a positive direction to promote what matters to you most. Your numbers are 4, 17, 23, 27, 31, 36, 40.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Take note of what others ask of you, and decide what's in your best interest before committing. A disciplined attitude coupled with intelligence and alternative suggestions will give you the leverage you need to get what you want. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Situations will get blown out of proportion if you can't make up your mind. Avoid being cornered by someone impatient and eager to make you look bad. Personal growth, self-improvement and doing whatever will ease stress are encouraged. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't waste time on things you cannot change. Look beyond the moment, and focus on what you can do to make your life better in the future. Be honest with yourself and those who try to stand in your way. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You'll outmaneuver any competition you encounter if you offer options that are bound to capture interest, but before you head down that

path, be sure you can deliver what you promise. Know your audience, do your research and forge ahead. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll be pulled in different directions if you let others take over. Know when to say no and when to speak up, and do your own thing. Listen to your heart and the truth, and make decisions that don't tax you. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Handle internal problems diplomatically. Get along with those you live or work alongside, and you will get ahead. Embrace change and use your skills efficiently, and you will positively influence others. You will excel. Romance is encouraged. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Take better care of yourself. Get involved in events that will push you toward a healthier lifestyle. Aim to lower stress and make your life and the projects you take on easier. Verify information, and base your decisions on the truth. *****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Learn from your mistakes in order to avoid a problematic situation. Honesty is the best policy when dealing with shared expenses, space or plans. A minimalist attitude will help maintain a sense of belonging and hope for the future. **

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): An open mind will lead to new beginnings. Don't get trapped in the past or by someone's dilemma. Concentrate on what's important to you and the best ways to achieve your goals. Speak up, and you'll attract attention and assistance. *****

EUGENIA LAST
THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Re-assess your financial situation, and make adjustments that help ease stress due to end-of-year expenses. A change at home can give you wiggle room to take advantage of an opportunity to get involved in something that intrigues you. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Emotions will flare up quickly if you disagree with a peer, friend or lover. Pay attention to the way you look, personal growth and your health. Don't try to change others; put your effort into being the best you can be. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): An open mind will help you overlook what isn't perfect. Offer positive support to others, and you will ward off someone talking about you behind your back. A chance to learn something new will encourage you to put your energy into something meaningful. ***

Birthday Baby: You are witty, opportunistic and determined. You are imaginative and flirtatious.

☾ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼ Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

Difficulty Level *** 12/09

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WONDERWORD® By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SENDING CHRISTMAS CARDS Solution: 8 letters

T S E R A H S H A N D M A D E
H N G N I T E E R G P E C M N
A O E I A L A U T R I V A O I
N W L M V D T N I A P I T L
K M P I A I E Y S H L E S O N
F A E R D N N S T S G R S H O
U N G L E A R G I E U S P O
L F A M I L Y O C G R A E Y
E T S O P M I F F P N A D L H
T H S I W E S G R F E E H D T
T B E L L S A I I I I T P C A
E F M E O P S C N O E C S O E
R P A T T E R N E A U N E D R
M E R R Y A L P S I D S D E W
R E E H C Y L E R E C N I S L

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Address, Artistic, Bells, Cats, Charity, Cheer, Code, Craft, Design, Display, Email, Family, Friends, Giving, Greeting, Handmade, Holiday, Laugh, Letter, Merry, Message, Note, Office, Online, Open, Ornament, Paint, Pattern, Peace, Pets, Photo, Poem, Post, Religious, Share, Sincerely, Smile, Snowman, Stamp, Surprise, Thankful, Virtual, Wish, Wreath, Year

Yesterday's Answer: Chocolate

Treasures 25, 26, 31 and 33 through 47 can be purchased online in time for the holidays at WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Nets beat Mavs 102-99, hand Dallas 5th consecutive home loss



DALLAS (AP)—James Harden and the Brooklyn Nets were in danger of back-to-back losses for the first time this season, trailing Luka Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks by 17 points in the third quarter after blowing a double-digit lead against Chicago.

The Eastern Conference leaders responded during Harden's "go" time this time.

Kevin Durant scored 24 points, Harden had 23 points and 12 assists, and the Nets beat Dallas 102-99 on Tuesday night, handing the Mavericks their fifth consecutive home loss.

"We've been in this league long enough to know it's winning time. It's go time," said Harden, who also had nine rebounds. "Throughout the course of the game, I feel like we got good shots. We just missed them. We just kept sticking with it and kept sticking with it. You've got to just keep shooting, especially if that's what you do."

The Mavericks keep shooting—and missing.

Luka Doncic scored 28 points but had another rough night from 3-point range along with his teammates, except for the young sensation's 30-foot banked shot just before the first-half buzzer. Kristaps Porzingis had 17 points and 12 rebounds.

Harden easily beat Doncic one-on-one for a layup and Brooklyn's biggest lead at 100-97 with 1:23 remaining. The Nets didn't take their first lead until the middle of the fourth quarter.

Dallas didn't make a basket after Doncic's short jumper with 3:51 to go and finished 9 of 46 (19.6%) from long range. Tim Hardaway Jr. missed all seven from deep, including an open look that bounced off the back of the rim at the buzzer.

"We had a lot of open looks there in the fourth quarter that just didn't go down," Dallas coach Jason Kidd said. "And then Timmy has a wide-open look. You couldn't ask for a better look to tie up the game."

The Nets trailed by 11 entering the fourth quarter before outscoring Dallas 27-13. Durant, who made 5 of 6 shots and scored 11 points in the final quarter, and Patty Mills hit consecutive 3s to cut a nine-point deficit to three early in the fourth. Mills scored 10 points.

"It's a character win where you just want to make the right plays to get back in the game and you want to turn the momentum to your side," said Durant, who was 10 of 22 from the field and had seven rebounds. "I think we did that tonight."



Dallas Mavericks forward Reggie Bullock, left, defends as Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant (7) works for a shot in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas, Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. AP

Nic Claxton missed two free throws with Brooklyn leading by three with 20 seconds remaining, but Doncic missed from beyond the arc before Hardaway's miss. Doncic was 3 of 11 from deep.

The Mavericks (11-12) dropped below .500 for the first time since getting blown

out by Atlanta in their opener despite the return of both Doncic and Porzingis. They both missed the previous loss to Memphis, the first time that's happened this season.

In three games since setting a franchise record by shooting 68.7% in a 32-point victory at New Orleans, Dallas is at 38%.

"Missed shots have been our narrative for a while now," said Jalen Brunson, who had 10 points on 4-of-8 shooting. "But we're getting the looks. We're working on it. We've just got to translate it to the game."

Lakers 117, Celtics 102

In Los Angeles, LeBron James

scored 30 points, Russell Westbrook added 24 points and 11 assists, and Los Angeles beat Boston in the latest chapter of the NBA's most storied rivalry.

Anthony Davis had 17 points and 16 rebounds for the Lakers, who produced one of their best recent performances

in their fourth victory in six games overall. Los Angeles made 56.5% of its shots in the first three quarters and throttled Jayson Tatum's supporting cast defensively.

Tatum scored 14 of his 34 points in a first-quarter blitz for the Celtics, who dropped to 1-2 on their four-game West Coast trip. Jaylen Brown sat out his third straight game with a strained right hamstring, and nobody else managed more than Robert Williams III's 13 points for Boston.

Boston and Los Angeles split their season series 1-1 for the fifth straight campaign.

Knicks 121, Spurs 109

In San Antonio, R.J. Barrett made a career-high seven 3-pointers and scored 32 points, and New York beat San Antonio to snap a three-game skid.

Alec Burks scored 18 points, Immanuel Quickley added 16 points and Julius Randle had 15 for the Knicks, who hadn't won at San Antonio since Jan. 2, 2014.

Derrick White had 26 points, six rebounds and seven assists for the Spurs, who have dropped two straight after a season-long three-game winning streak. Dejounte Murray added 15 points, seven rebounds and seven assists.

Analysis: Steph Curry must-see TV anytime cameras are near

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

The shot has been replayed millions of times already on video and social platforms. And considering it was from the stands before a game, it obviously didn't even count.

Such is the lure of Stephen Curry.

When he does something, everyone tunes in.

For those who haven't seen what he did Saturday night, here it is. It's a tradition he continued from the Golden State Warriors' former home, Oracle Arena, and brought to the Chase Center.

At Oracle, it was a shot from the tunnel at the end of his pregame shooting session. At Chase, it's been from a variety of places, most recently a corner of the stands. A security guard fires him a ball and Curry lets it fly.

Swish.

"He's got range," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said.

Curry's got it all. Range, game, rings, charm, skills, a sparkling resume, a great organization, a great arena, a great fan base and a great team again. He's funny. He's one of the best interviews in

the NBA. He's made birdies at Augusta National. He went to the Ryder Cup as a fan and actually thought nobody would notice.

He'll be 34 by the time the season ends, is averaging just under 28 points per game and is playing like he has a very real chance of winning the NBA's MVP award this season.

The Golden State Warriors, along with Phoenix, are an NBA-best 20-4 after beating the Orlando Magic on Monday night. They've been playing as well as any team in the league. They're a legitimate title contender. And in a few days, Curry will overtake Ray Allen as the career leader in 3-pointers made.

Curry has 2,958 after making seven in Monday's win over the Magic. Allen retired with 2,973. Fans in Philadelphia on Saturday or Indiana on Monday are probably going to see a treat—some history, when Curry becomes the 3-point king.

There are some arguments that never will be settled. Wilt Chamberlain or Bill Russell, LeBron James or Michael Jordan, Phil Jackson or Pat Riley, Celtics dynasty or Bulls dynasty.

In the best shooter argument, though, there really is no debate.

It's Curry. Case closed. The dunk used to be the coolest thing in basketball. It's the 3 now and Curry is why.

"There's never been anyone like him," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said.

If the NBA had a likeability metric, Curry would be the leader there, too. He's 6-foot-3 and 198 pounds, not 6-foot-10 and 275. And although he's put on some noticeable muscle in recent years, he still kind of has the everyman vibe to him. He plays the way that most people on playgrounds think they play: great ballhandling, great shooting, except he's actually a great ballhandler and great shooter, and the guy on the playground makes the occasional deep 3 and gets to pretend.

"I think he was still, for some reason, under the radar in the beginning," Popovich said. "He's kind of slight stature. At the time, he wasn't that strong. He always looked like he was 17 or 18 years old. You didn't look at him and say 'Hey, he's going to do this.' But as the years went by and you realized he's one of the greatest

shooters you've ever seen, it became apparent that everything record-wise would be available to him."

Popovich is right. Just about every 3-point record in existence is owned by Curry, or soon will be.

Nobody has made more 3-pointers for one team, or in one season, or in one postseason. He made 30 3s against Minnesota in the 2018-19 season, the most anyone has made against one opponent in a season. He has made 163 against the Clippers, another record for the most all time against an opponent. He already has passed Allen for the most 3s all time, when including playoffs. The only record he hasn't gotten is most 3s in a game; his best is 13, the record is 14, set by Klay Thompson.

"He's one of the greatest players in the history of the game," Kerr said. "And he's the greatest 3-point shooter of all time."

This is what should scare NBA teams to their core about this Warriors team. Curry is as good as ever, the team is rolling and Thompson is a few weeks away from finally getting back on the court. A good team is go-

ing to get that much better. And Curry will be even better when it happens, because defenses know that they can't leave Thompson alone.

"I just like where we are right now," Curry said. "We've got good vibes around what we're doing. There's good energy. We've bounced back from tough losses really well. We're handling our business right now."

It's an old cliché that regular fans don't start watching the NBA until Christmas, and there is a certain amount of truth to that. That said, there have been compelling stories involving big names already this season. Kevin Durant, coming off another Olympic gold medal, is making scoring look easy in Brooklyn. Phoenix, coming off last season's run to the NBA Finals, won 18 consecutive games before falling to the Warriors. The reigning champion Milwaukee Bucks, when their whole roster is together, look title-capable again.

But Curry is must-see TV anytime, even when he's just taking shots from the stands before games.

And the Warriors probably are going to be worth watching all the way to the end.

Analysis: Patriots' downfall after Brady lasted one season

By ARNIE STAPLETON
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



It didn't take long for the New England Patriots to become the New England Patriots again.

After stumbling through a 7-9 season last year while watching Tom Brady win a seventh ring in his first season with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Bill Belichick's squad is once again the class of the AFC.

Josh McDaniels' brilliant plan to have rookie quarterback Mac Jones throw just three passes Monday night paved the way for New England's 14-10 win at Buffalo in the snow globe and wind tunnel that was Highmark Stadium.

Behind those 46 runs in 49 snaps, the retooled Patriots won their sixth road game in six tries and pushed their winning streak to seven games, improving to 9-4.

That's a half-game better than the Kansas City Chiefs, Tennessee Titans and Baltimore Ravens in the log-jammed conference race.

And the Patriots are still finding ways to shut down Peyton Manning, who lost his head-to-head series with Brady 11-6.

The quarterback who was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame four months ago explained on ESPN's "Manning-Cast" during the Patriots-Bills slog-fest that the Patriots public relations politely declined his



New England Patriots quarterback Mac Jones, left, hands off to cornerback J.C. Jackson during the first half of an NFL football game against the Buffalo Bills in Orchard Park, N.Y., Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. AP

request to interview Jones.

"Well, I tried to talk to Mac Jones, and he was very respectful," Manning relayed. "He said, 'Peyton, I want to do it, but can you call our PR director, Stacey (James)? Because he kind of has to oversee all things. I said, 'No problem.' I called Stacey, very professional, I said, 'Stacey, I'm talking to Coach Belichick, can I talk to Mac Jones?'"

The answer was no, although Manning took the rare

rejection in stride.

"And I gotta tell you, I appreciate how they're handling Mac Jones. They are trying to protect him, give him as few off-the-field distractions as possible, let him concentrate on playing football," Manning said.

"So, yes, I did get denied. It was the first quarterback I haven't talked to. But, I appreciate it," Manning said.

Although Manning isn't accustomed to getting turned

down, he said he understood what the Patriots were doing because he encountered the same treatment during his rookie season in Indianapolis in 1998.

"Bill Polian, as a rookie with me with the Colts, did the same thing. He didn't let the marketing department talk to me, the community relations department talk to me. He said, 'Hey, it's all football this first season. Don't bother him,'" recounted Manning. "And I think the Patriots are

taking that same approach with Mac Jones and it's paying off, it's working."

Everything's working in New England a year after the Patriots stumbled behind aging QB Cam Newton.

Jones, the 15th overall draft pick out of Alabama last June, finished 2 of 3 for 19 yards in becoming the NFL's third quarterback to win nine games in his rookie season, joining Pittsburgh's Ben Roethlisberger in 2004, and Dal-

las' Dak Prescott in 2016. He also joined Roethlisberger and Prescott in becoming the NFL's third rookie QB to win his first six road starts.

New England has a two-win edge over the Bills (7-5) in the AFC East standings a year after they were swept by the Bills in losing their division for the first time since 2008.

Now, the Patriots get a Week 14 bye a week before closing out with a visit to Indianapolis followed by a rematch with the Bills at Gillette Stadium on Dec. 26, another home game against the upstart Jacksonville Jaguars and a road game at resurgent Miami.

They have the smoothest path to the lone bye that goes to the AFC's top playoff seed and home field throughout the playoffs, something they've usually parlayed into Super Bowl appearances.

Belichick is the only person on the planet who owns more than Brady's seven Super Bowl rings. They won six together in Foxborough and Belichick won two as Bill Parcell's right-hand man with the New York Giants before that, giving him eight titles to go with four runner-up finishes.

Although the NFC features Brady's Bucs, Prescott's Cowboys, Aaron Rodgers' Packers, Kyler Murray's Cardinals and Matthew Stafford's Rams, would anyone be surprised if Belichick won his ninth overall ring a year after Brady won his seventh?

Vikings leaning hard on Jefferson in quest to save season

By BRIAN HALL
ASSOCIATED PRESS

After Adam Thielen was injured on Minnesota's sixth offensive play Sunday, Kirk Cousins naturally focused on his other standout receiver, Justin Jefferson.

Jefferson responded with career highs of 11 catches and 182 yards, but the Vikings wasted that performance in a gut-wrenching 29-27 loss to Detroit.

It's becoming a trend.

Despite a dynamic and record-filled two seasons in the NFL for Jefferson, the Vikings are again looking at the playoff picture from the outside. Their loss to the Lions dropped them to 5-7 in a crowded NFC race.

"As long as we don't get the 'W,' it doesn't matter what type of game I have," Jefferson said. "If I have a career game, record-setting game, it doesn't matter. If we don't come out with the 'W,' it's pointless."

The career day gave Jefferson 2,609 receiving yards through his first 28 games. He surpassed Hall of Famer

Jerry Rice (2,497) for the third-most receiving yards in NFL history through two seasons. Only Odell Beckham Jr. (2,755) and Randy Moss (2,726) had more through their first two seasons, and Jefferson has five more games on the 2021 schedule.

Jefferson had the second-most receiving yards by a rookie in NFL history last year, breaking several franchise rookie records previously held by the Hall of Famer Moss. The Vikings still finished 7-9 and missed the playoffs. The defeat in Detroit to the previously winless Lions could prove disastrous for their attempt to make the playoffs this season.

"There's only so much that I personally can control, so I just always try to do my part, what I can control," Jefferson said.

After a two-week stretch when he was targeted just nine times with five catches for 90 yards, Jefferson has taken full control. In the past four games, he's averaged 11 targets, eight catches and 144 yards per game with



Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Justin Jefferson (18) is tackled by Detroit Lions cornerback Jerry Jacobs (39) during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021, in Detroit. AP

three touchdowns.

Jefferson is seventh in the league with 78 catches. He's second in receiving yards with 1,209, behind only the Los Angeles Rams' Cooper Kupp. Jefferson has the most receiving yards of anyone in the NFL over the past two seasons.

"He's done a great job," Cousins said. "He plays big.

He's not a big guy, necessarily, but he plays big with long arms and has a big catch radius. He runs so well, he cuts so well, he's great after the catch running away from people. He's natural at finding the football. I think our coaches have done a tremendous job of finding ways to get him the ball."

The Vikings will need Jefferson just as much going forward. Thielen has a significant ankle sprain that will likely keep him out of Thursday's game against Pittsburgh and possibly longer.

He has not practiced this week. Neither has left tackle Christian Darrisaw (ankle), who did not play at Detroit.

Running back Dalvin Cook (shoulder) returned to practice Tuesday on a limited basis, but he's unlikely to play on Thursday.

Minnesota did activate veteran cornerback Patrick Peterson from the COVID-19 reserve list on Tuesday. Linebackers Eric Kendricks (bicep) and Anthony Barr (hamstring/knee) also returned to full participation, putting them on track to play against the Steelers.

When Thielen missed a game last year while on the COVID-19 list, Jefferson had a season-high 13 targets. He finished with seven catches for 70 yards and two touchdowns to lead Minnesota to a 28-27 win against Carolina.

"I remember it like it was yesterday," Jefferson said. "Defenses focused on me a little bit, but we still had an overall good game. I think like three receivers had seven catches that game, so I mean, if one man's down, the next man's up. You can't really get frustrated over that. You've just got to keep playing and make sure everybody's on the same page."

TASA receives baseball equipment from non-profit

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



The Tinian Amateur Sports Association recently received a donation of baseball equipment from nonprofit group Baseball Without Borders based in California.

TASA president Jose Kiyoshi said the donation of baseball bats, mitts, balls, and uniforms will help it grow the

sport of baseball on Tinian and is a good morale booster for anyone involved in the sport on the island.

"We received this sports equipment from California through a nonprofit organization called Baseball Without Borders led by its president Juan Bustos. I saw his organization through Facebook and I reached out to him and we coordinated with the U.S. Marine detachment that is stationed here on Tinian. Special thank you to Gunny Stilwell for facilitating the shipment," he said.

Kiyoshi said the baseball equipment may be pre-loved but they are in very good condition and can be used right away by the Tinian Amateur Baseball Association.

He thanked Baseball Without Borders and Bustos for the thoughtful donation.

"Si 'yu'us ma'ase' for their generosity to go out of their way and provide our youth and adults with the needed equipment and we hope that more donations are forthcoming our way. This donation will help our organization and players alike because financially it's very expensive buying gloves and other base-



Tinian Amateur Sports Association staff pose with the baseball equipment donated by nonprofit group Baseball Without Borders based in California.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ball equipment and sometimes players want to play but they have no gloves but now we can make them use these during game time," he said.

In its website, Baseball Without Borders Foundation said it's dedicated to education and cultural exchange through baseball. It sends equipment and

players overseas to assist players of all ages and continents to enjoy America's pastime.

In 1995, Baseball Without Borders Foundation began with a mission to expose youth to cultures existing beyond the American border. Using baseball as the means, it took a team of 36 players to Mexicali, Mexico. The experience helped the non-profit soon realized that they needed to do more than just play the game and learn new traditions.

"While we had access to baseball equipment, the opposing team did not. Their players were catching balls with their bare hands, rounding bases in their socks and batting without helmets, yet they still enjoyed the game. Aware of their needs, we couldn't return home without doing something about it. This event inspired a new calling for Baseball Without Borders; to collect and donate baseball equipment to impoverished youth around the world!" the group said in its website.

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EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	17	7	.708	—
Philadelphia	13	11	.542	4
Boston	13	12	.520	4½
New York	12	12	.500	5
Toronto	11	13	.458	6

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	14	11	.560	—
Washington	14	11	.560	—
Charlotte	14	12	.538	½
Atlanta	13	12	.520	1
Orlando	5	20	.200	9

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	17	8	.680	—
Milwaukee	16	9	.640	1
Cleveland	13	12	.520	4
Indiana	10	16	.385	7½
Detroit	4	19	.174	12

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	14	10	.583	—
Dallas	11	12	.478	2½
San Antonio	8	15	.348	5½
Houston	7	16	.304	6½
New Orleans	7	19	.269	8

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	16	7	.696	—
Denver	11	12	.478	5
Minnesota	11	13	.458	5½
Portland	11	14	.440	6
Oklahoma City	7	16	.304	9

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	20	4	.833	—
Phoenix	20	4	.833	—
L.A. Clippers	13	12	.520	7½
L.A. Lakers	13	12	.520	7½
Sacramento	10	14	.417	10

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	4	0	.692	350	200
Buffalo	7	5	0	.583	336	196
Miami	6	7	0	.462	254	288
N.Y. Jets	3	9	0	.250	217	367

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	8	4	0	.667	304	290
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	371	283
Houston	2	10	0	.167	164	323
Jacksonville	2	10	0	.167	180	320

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	8	4	0	.667	282	260
Cincinnati	7	5	0	.583	331	267
Pittsburgh	6	5	1	.542	244	286
Cleveland	6	6	0	.500	254	267

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	8	4	0	.667	303	259
L.A. Chargers	7	5	0	.583	314	315
Denver	6	6	0	.500	237	218
Las Vegas	6	6	0	.500	274	312

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	8	4	0	.667	353	267
Washington	6	6	0	.500	246	297
Philadelphia	6	7	0	.462	337	291
N.Y. Giants	4	8	0	.333	211	273

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	9	3	0	.750	377	270
Atlanta	5	7	0	.417	216	332
Carolina	5	7	0	.417	236	253
New Orleans	5	7	0	.417	274	276

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Green Bay	9	3	0	.750	283	242
Minnesota	5	7	0	.417	308	305
Chicago	4	8	0	.333	201	287
Detroit	1	10	1	.125	203	316

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	10	2	0	.833	343	224
L.A. Rams	8	4	0	.667	336	270
San Francisco	6	6	0	.500	303	278
Seattle	4	8	0	.333	239	249

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAYRIT

From Page 20

chipped in 10 points against the eventual runner-up team that had ex-Philippine professional player Romy Dela Rosa in its lineup. The 6'2" Dela Rosa was drafted No. 5 overall in the 1989 Philippine Basketball Association draft and was a four-time champion with Formula Shell.

Before the finals against Dela Rosa and company, Dayrit's San Diego Ballers swept their two elimination round assignments with the Gen. Trias, Cavite in the Philippines

native scoring his tournament-high 12 points in the second game after totaling only 6 points in the first game.

In the semis, his team went up against two other ex-PBA pros, 6'3" former Ginebra guard Pat Codiñera and 6'2" former Pepsi swingman Django Rivera, and he fired 8 points in the win. He said Codiñera and Rivera's team lacked a reliable point guard and that's why despite their height advantage they lost.

Dayrit said he's happy to still continue his love of playing basketball in the U.S. mainland. He left Saipan



Bogs Dayrit shows off his WWW-style championship belt and ring after his team, San Diego Ballers, won the 50-and-over title of the recent 2021 Southern California Basketball Tournament.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

just last Nov. 20 and is now based in National City, California. Coincidentally, one of his teammates at San Diego Ballers is childhood friend Gerry Cadua.

Expected to start work as a cook at Sunshine Senior Living in January, he said he misses his close friends and *kumpraires* Boy Garcia, Bernard Montano, and Tropang Legends on Saipan. Dayrit also gave a shout out to his

nephew and also to his boss at WTSCO Jerick Sablan.

Dayrit first arrived on Saipan in 1996 and worked for several companies while suiting up for numerous leagues in his spare time. He momentarily left the island in 2010 but not before winning two championships, bagging the MVP of the Mobil Invitational Basketball League, and being named two times in the same league's mythical five.



Bogs Dayrit, left, with childhood friend Gerry Cadua.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

APARTE

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Marianas College staff said he's been competing in races since he was in high school in his hometown of Villasis, Pangasinan in the Philippines.

Derexes, who always serves as motorcycle or car marshal in local cycling and triathlon races, said he's taken part in almost all manner of races in the CNMI including the Taga-

man, Hell of Marianas, Tour de Tinian, countless duathlon, and even the Saipan Marathon.

Hernando Cristobal completed the Top 3 in 1:21:30 and the Yuman Construction employee said he was glad to have a podium finish in the race despite next to no training due to work and the inclement weather.

The 47-year-old from Bulacan, Philippines congratulated all riders that took part in

SULC's 5th Annual Bike Race.

In the MTB short course for men, Romando Lagrio won the short course that encompassed the Banzai/Mobil/Banzai route in 1:04:28. He was followed by Leo Bateong and John Dexter San Pedro with times of 1:05:33 and 1:06:24, respectively.

For the women MTB short course, Grace Salindo left everyone biting her dust after crossing the finish line in

1:09:46. Imee Altamirano was runner-up in 1:16:15 with Maila Buenabaja taking third place in 1:18:15.

There were no entries in the long course MTB for women.

Proceeds from the SULC 5th Annual Bike Race fundraiser will be used for various year-long programs that are in line with the club's service goals as well as other humanitarian services as the needs arise.

FAVORED

From Page 20

ahead at 7-1 when Macario was forced to pull out due to an ankle injury.

The finals match was Torres and Macario's second meeting in the competition, as they earlier crossed paths in the men's doubles title game. Torres partnered with Jordan Pangilinan in beating Ezekiel and his older brother Daniel in the finale, 22-20, 21-15. Before losing to Torres and Pangilinan, the Macario siblings pulled off an 8-21, 21-13, 21-16 win over Nathan Guerrero and Hajin Oh to advance to the finals.

Pangilinan and Torres and the other top finishers in the NMI Badminton National Championships 2021, including winners in the U19 division will be recognized in a brief awards ceremony this Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.



Nets beat Mavs 102-99, hand Dallas 5th consecutive home loss **PAGE 17**

Saipan Tribune Sports



TASA receives baseball equipment from non-profit **PAGE 19**

20 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2021

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Favored badminton players deliver

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Seeded players in the NMI Badminton National Championships 2021 did not disappoint, as they ruled their respective competitions last weekend at the TSL Sports Complex.



Janelle Pangilinan, who was the No. 1 seed in the women's open singles, topped the division and notched two more titles in the tournament organized by the Northern Marianas Badminton Association for the first time through the support of Badminton Oceania.

The 2019 Samoa Pacific Games participant clinched the singles crown after beating



Janelle Pangilinan, left, prepares to serve, while Jen Savellano gets ready for the next play during their semis match against Miles Guerrero and Malou Malasarte in the women's open doubles event in the NMI Badminton National Championships 2021 earlier this month at the TSL Sports Complex.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Hannah Choi in the finals, 21-16, 21-18, and she also won the women's open doubles (with

Jen Savellano) and mixed open doubles (with Nate Guerrero). In the mixed doubles finals,

the No. 1 seed Pangilinan and Guerrero took only two games to down Joseph Torres and

Choi, 21-12, 21-18. Earlier, Choi and Torres stunned No. 2 seed Jordan Pangilinan and

Malou Malasarte, 21-15, 21-4, to reach the finals.

In the women's doubles title match, the pair of Pangilinan and Savellano won the battle between the Top 2 seeded duos after two games. The No. 1 seed and eventual champions labored for a 21-19 triumph in the opener before notching a much easier 21-12 win in the second game. Choi and Serano moved into the finals following a 21-6, 21-15 victory over Jen Cardino and Lucelle Lampera, while Savellano and Pangilinan defeated Miles Guerrero and Malasarte in the other semis tiff, 21-7, 21-11.

Meanwhile, after missing the title in the mixed doubles, the No. 1 seed Torres returned to the court and bagged the men's open singles championship. Torres played in the finals against Ezekiel Macario and moved closer to victory after taking the first game, 21-16. However, Torres could not close out the finale early, as Macario bounced back in the second game with a tough 21-19 win to force a rubber. In the decider, Torres was

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Aparte tops SULC MTB race

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Michael Aparte smoked the competition in the mountain bike category of Saipan Unity Lions Club's 5th Annual



Aparte

nual Bike Race held last Nov. 28.

The 33-year-old Cagayan de Oro in the Philippines native negotiated the Banzai/Mobil/1-Million Gallon Water Tank Turnaround/Suicide Cliff/Bird Island/Banzai route in 1:18:32.

Despite not really training because of work commitments, the Seafix Inc. employee was able to win the long course in relatively easy fashion.

"Conditions were OK and I didn't had a hard time with the course despite having only trained two times before the race," he said.

While he's a relative newcomer on Saipan, Aparte has been into cycling when was still living in the Philippines. He is dedicating his victory to his family.

Coming in second in the MTB long course was Floro Derexes, who crossed the finish line in a time of 1:19:06.

The 58-year-old Northern
See APARTE on Page 19



Bogs Dayrit, second left, poses with the rest of his teammates at San Diego Ballers after the team won the 50-and-over title of the recent 2021 Southern California Basketball Tournament.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dayrit suits up for champion team in SoCal

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Not even two weeks after relocating to California, Bogs Dayrit immediately made a name for himself in a local

tournament after suiting up for the champion team in the 2021 Southern California Basketball Tournament's 50-and-over division.

The 5'11" veteran of many



commercial leagues on Saipan said his team, San Diego Ballers, was blessed with a lot of talented and tall players and he was just happy to contribute on the way

to the age group title that came with it not only a championship ring but also a WWE-style championship belt.

In the finals, Dayrit played mostly small forward and
See DAYRIT on Page 19